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VI

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2 Vol. se





THE CORRESPONDENCE *of*  
W I L L I A M I.  
& B I S M A R C K  
WITH OTHER LETTERS *from*  
*and to* PRINCE BISMARCK









WILLIAM I.

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THE CORRESPONDENCE *of* V.1  
WILLIAM I.  
& BISMARCK

WITH OTHER LETTERS *from*  
*and to* PRINCE BISMARCK

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TRANSLATED BY J. A. FORD · WITH  
PORTRAIT AND FACSIMILE LETTERS  
IN TWO VOLUMES · VOLUME ONE

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NEW YORK · FREDERICK A.  
STOKES COMPANY · PUBLISHERS

480550

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

It is by the late Prince Bismarck's express desire that his correspondence with the Emperor William I. has been published, as he considered that these letters show better than can be done in any other way the unique relationship which existed between him and his august master. He also wished that certain of his personal political letters exchanged with his contemporaries should be made public, as they serve to authenticate and supplement his autobiography. Prince Bismarck himself selected these letters, and they were found, after his death, carefully arranged in portfolios.

The correspondence with the Emperor William I. has been collected in the first volume; the second volume contains the correspondence with other political personages.

Among the letters are some which discuss phases of Prussian politics with a purely local or temporary interest; these have been omitted from the edition which is now offered to the public. A few of the letters contained in these volumes are not now published for the first time; they are given here in order to make the series complete, and because they have been known hitherto only in an incorrect or fragmentary form.

Prince Bismarck left instructions that the most characteristic of the Emperor William's letters should be reproduced in facsimile. One of these, and one showing the great Chancellor's own striking handwriting, are included in the present work.

Every care has been taken, in translating the letters, to preserve their original style.



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## I

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, *September 12, '52.*

In reply to your kind communication of the 8th inst, I apprise you that I have requested Colonel Count Waldersee to represent me at the christening of your son on the 20th of this month. I regret that I cannot fulfil this act myself and again thank you for your friendly remembrance of me on such a glad occasion in your family, with the wish that mother and son may ever remain in God's gracious hands.

I thank you very much for your sympathy with me in respect of the accident which has befallen me. I am almost quite well again, but the doctors will not allow me to ride yet, with the result that I cannot be present at any of the army inspections now taking place.

Your

PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

It seems as if there will soon be an end to the old Zollverein! The blindness of the Darmstadters is too terrible; it will cost Austria and them dear!

## 2

COBLENZ, *January 29, '53.*

Only two words by a safe opportunity, to offer you my congratulations—not so much on the *two* decorations—as on *one* Prokesch!!\* You can imagine my indignation, and I am pleased at the earnest language used by Manteuffel which, however, Count Arnim† has unwarrantably softened down! The man ought to go into the Austrian service.

\*Freiherr von Prokesch-Osten, a former Austrian ambassador in Berlin, was appointed delegate to the Bundestag in place of Count Thun.

†Count Arnim was Prussian Minister at Vienna.

Your position will become a difficult and a very disagreeable one, the more so as they want you away from Frankfurt-on-the-Main on account of your not being Austrian enough. I expect you to be as firm against P(rokesch) as you were against Th(un) and not to let yourself be driven away.

But what is one to say to this Vienna perfidy, so immediately after the Emperor's visit? It is thoroughly Austrian *contra* Prussian. I should like to know what would be said in Vienna if Bernstoff were now given your post?? It would be called an insult.

The Montijo marriage sets me agreeably at rest because no European princely house need unite itself with the—parvenu. I am curious to see how this episode will agree with Napoleon—politically and corporally. Only no sleeping on our side—but also no nonsensical writing, like the *Kreuz Zeitung*, which is completely crazy.

Your

PR. OF P.

## 3

COBLENZ, February 19, '53.

Your letter of the 2nd of this month has interested me exceedingly, both on account of the first appearance of the eastern \* Prokesch and of your *raisonnement* on Prussia's attitude towards her eastern neighbour and *vis-à-vis* France. I fully share the views you advance, and am glad that your ministration in Frankfurt-on-the-Main is assured. The speech of F. M. L.† Prokesch at his first appearance in the Federal Assembly was very *frappant*. Whysuch an historical *déduction* right from Charlemagne, before a body which has been in existence some 30 years? Probably only to show that a *new* era has commenced for Germany which is to preserve the multiformity in uniformity but—with Austria.

\* Probably a pun on his name of Prokesch-Osten.

† Lt. Field-marshal. (Translator's notes.)



as German Emperor at the head! *Voilà le fin mot de la chose!* But before this goal is attained we must also have a word to say!

Manteuffel writes me that Leiningen's mission at Constantinople will probably fail. Matters will in that case become very serious, taken with the accumulation of troops on the frontiers. Add to this the state of affairs in Italy from Milan to the Faro! and the whole is in flames! How awful the outrage committed on the young Emperor is. I telegraphed him my cordial sympathy yesterday evening and by one o'clock to-day had received an answer through Count Arnim.

Our attitude in all this is, as you rightly say, to wait! but to keep our eyes open and be prepared!

With kindest regards to your wife,

Your

PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

4

[ST. PETERSBURG] *January 2, '61.*

With your Majesty's most gracious permission, I, as a faithful servant of the Royal House, lay at your Majesty's feet the most humble expression of the sympathy with which the hearts of all your Majesty's subjects will be filled by to-day's sad tidings. Apart from the feelings of respectful attachment with which, thank God, every man of honour in our country looks up to his sovereign, your Majesty's brother who now rests with God was at all times to me an especially gracious master, and your Majesty has been pleased in an equally gracious manner to accord me so many proofs of benevolence and confidence that, with the assurance that I will devote myself as long as I live with unswerving and zealous fidelity to your Majesty, I may lay the expression of deeply-felt gratitude at the steps of the throne. May God accord your Majesty a long and blessed reign and grant me

to bring up my sons to be as faithful servants of the exalted Royal House as I endeavour to be.

V. BISMARCK.

From the draft.

## 5

MAJOR VON STRUBBERG TO BISMARCK.

SANS-SOUCI, *January 6, '61.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I have the honour, by order of his Majesty the King, who regrets very much that lack of time prevents him from writing, herewith duteously to report that his Majesty has received your sympathising letter and has commanded me to thank your Excellency for the expression of faithful adherence contained therein.

In executing his Majesty's gracious commands I have the honour to subscribe myself, with the assurance of my highest esteem and devotion,

Your Excellency's

most obedient

V. STRUBBERG,

*Major and Adjutant of His Majesty the King.*

## 6

(Telegram to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for the King. From the Draft).

LEGATION DE PRUSSE  
EN FRANCE.

PARIS, *October 29, '62.*

Yesterday, Tuesday, I dined at St. Cloud, shall be received in audience Saturday and will be able to travel Sunday. The Emperor is perfectly reassured with regard to our internal affairs. According to his and Drouyn de Lluys' statements the latter's appointment \* is without any

\* As foreign minister in place of Thouvenel.

bias for Austria, or against Prussia, and has significance only for the Italian relations. The Emperor's utterances with respect to us are more friendly than ever, no indication of intention to visit your Majesty. Coolness towards England noticeable on the part of the Emperor and of the minister.

v. B.

## 7

BABELSBERG, *November 12, '62.*

If you wish to speak to me I shall be in Berlin at 4.30 to-day.

To-morrow at 2.30 I want to speak with Delbrück,\* in the presence of Count Itzenplitz, to have an exposé on the proceedings of the Commercial Congress before I receive the experts who are assembled here, which could take place on Friday. Will you be present, too?

WILHELM.

## 8

(Draft)

BERLIN, *January 1, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY

will, I venture to trust, most graciously permit me to lay my New Year's congratulations in writing at your Majesty's feet.

May the new year first bring your Majesty speedy recovery from the present indisposition; then may God bless your Majesty's reign to the welfare of our country, and fill your Majesty's heart with the consolation and satisfaction which spring from the consciousness of having discharged the great and onerous tasks of the Royal vocation and of having achieved, under unfavourable conditions, successes which are full of blessing to the fatherland.

v. BISMARCK.

\* Director in the ministry of commerce.

## 9

B., January 11, '63.

As the newspapers are saying that I have written to Lieut. Col. v. Vincke in such terms as induced him to hurry to me at once, (hinting, of course, that his advanced political colour is now to be used by me) I send you a copy (s. p. r.) of my letter to v. V. in order that you may communicate it to the rest of the ministers and they may see *what* I have written, and *how* the newspapers seek to warp and cast suspicion on everything, for certainly no one of the newspaper scribes saw the letter!

WILHELM.

## 10

BERLIN, January 15, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY

has been pleased to return to me the enclosed four bills which were laid before your Majesty by the Ministry of State. I beg most respectfully to ask if your Majesty commands further reports on the same in order to remove any objections against signing them.

v. BISMARCK.

Marginal Note by the King:

I beg pardon for my *insouciance*, I really thought I *had signed* them, and sent everything back quickly in case the laws had to be introduced to-morrow. I learn from your communication that the House is already constituted and will, therefore, receive laws.

W.

January 15, '63.

## 11

B., January 24, '63.

I think it right not to let to-morrow, a day from which we expect so much, pass empty for v. d. Heydt, and have, therefore, myself conveyed to him the intelligence that he is

raised to the rank of Freiherr, and have commissioned Schleinitz to submit to me the order and patent, i. e. the diploma.

WILHELM.

12

B., January 24, '63.

Herewith the bills, which, if possible, should be laid before the two Houses to-morrow.

I also wish the decision of January 18, with respect to the celebration of March 17th, to be communicated *officially* to the Houses, so that everything may gain more *éclat*.

WILHELM.

13

B., January 27, '63.

I want to remind you, in connection with to-day's battle, that to-day is the birthday of my grandson, my second successor if God so wills, which might perhaps be mentioned in a patriotic sentence,\* if it could be made convenient.

Good luck to you! Make it very clear that the second (Lower) House is abusing its rights and is working the ruin of the country, that the Upper House has also used its rights and has placed itself on the side of the Government; defect in the Constitution; that here also the King has only

\* The following extract from Bismarck's speech in the Landtag on January 27, 1863, shows how he used the "patriotic sentence" suggestion. "It is a remarkable coincidence that the discussion of this manifesto which is to be presented to our Royal master takes place on the birthday of the youngest presumptive heir to the throne. In this coincidence, gentlemen, we see a redoubled call to enter the lists boldly for the kingly rights, boldly for the rights of his Majesty's successors. The Prussian kingly office has not yet fulfilled its mission, it is not yet ready to become a purely ornamental decoration of your constitution or to be dovetailed like a dead piece of machinery into the mechanism of the parliamentary regimen."



to consult his Royal duty, and works the machine without a budget until the account is subsequently laid before the Second Chamber and voted.

WILHELM.

14

BERLIN, *January 27, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour to place before your Majesty the most humble enquiry whether your Majesty will be pleased, perhaps to-morrow or the day after to-morrow, to grant the English ambassador \* the audience which he solicits.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

I will receive him *to-day* at 1.30, of course not in uniform.

15

B., *January 30, '63.*

Tell Buchanan that on the whole he has correctly reproduced our conversation in the despatch. Only that I did not *say to Napoleon* † that I would surrender no spot of German land, although I *gave him to understand* this, but I told Buchanan that this is my fixed intention in all political eventualities.

Furthermore I did *not* say that neither I nor my son or grandson would live to see the consolidation of Germany, but: "I should probably not live to see it, but I *hope* my son or grandson will do so."

Where, towards the end, the question of an *alliance* between Prussia and Austria is the constant subject of discussion, it must read:

Better *understanding, entente cordiale*, desirable, for out of this will grow the unity of Germany and thereby her

\* Sir Andrew Buchanan.

† At the meeting at Baden Baden, in June, 1860.

prestige abroad! Every such endeavour is shattered on Austria's jealousy of Prussia, as Austria is continually seeking to crush her rival afresh, and this is the basis of her policy.

See to it that these corrections reach him in *correct* French or English, as coming from me.

WILHELM.

16

February 1, '63.

TO THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT.

I have already informed the Minister of the Interior orally that I am *principaliter* against granting the permission. As I now see that this special procession is to take place at 11 o'clock in the morning and the students' torchlight procession in the evening, and that therefore the *whole day* will be spent in revelry, I feel doubly disinclined to grant the permission, on the other hand the participators can be directed to postpone their intentions until March 17th. Besides, we have no idea who has got this committee up and *who* will take part in it??

Please reply to-morrow.

W.

17

BERLIN, February 3, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I had begged for the honour of being permitted to make my report; in the meantime Dr. Lauer has paid me a visit and wishes me to keep my room in order to prevent the possibility of the aggravation of a rheumatic attack which I myself did not regard as worth attention.

In these circumstances I most humbly beg to be permitted to submit in writing the despatches of which I intended to acquaint your Majesty.

To the intelligence about du Graty I would mention that

he would not consider the third Class sufficient. If your Majesty commands it could be tried, or he might be given the second now and the star for it when the time comes for his departure.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, your Majesty's anxious physician in ordinary has also forbidden me to take part in the hunt to-morrow at the Kanne.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Agree in that case to the second. (Second Class of the Order of the Red Eagle. Translator's note.)

## 18

BERLIN, *February 7, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most humbly to lay before your Majesty the draft for a short reply to the Address of the Upper House. Should the same meet with the sovereign approval I most respectfully submit the question whether your Majesty will be pleased to receive the presidential body of the House after the service to-morrow morning.<sup>1</sup>

As your Majesty is otherwise occupied to-day, I have not presented myself with my report, await, however, your Majesty's orders.

I most respectfully propose that assent be given to the arrangement telegraphed by Alvensleben; it corresponds with the instructions given to the general.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> To-morrow at 12.30.

W.

## 19

I am again so fatigued, that Dr. Grimm will not let me come to you this evening! I hope to do so nevertheless.

W.

20

B., February 7, '63.

Unfortunately I myself feel, without Grimm, so done up this evening that I must forego your *Soirée*. To-morrow, then, at 12.30, the Presidents of the Upper House.

W.

21

B., February 20, '63.

The two despatches for London and Paris have my entire approval. The removal of Reuss must, however, be taken into serious consideration. As *she* \* really has influence, *we* ought not now to make an enemy of *her*, seeing that *she* has Polish proclivities.

WILHELM.

22

BERLIN, February 20, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most humbly to place some telegrams before your Majesty. To that from Count Goltz I most respectfully remark:

Yesterday evening I found a telegraphic enquiry from him, in which he said that he would have the opportunity to-day of speaking fully with the Emperor Napoleon and wished to know how far he might go, if questioned, in his communications about the Convention.† As there was a danger of the answer arriving too late if I waited for your Majesty's commands I replied by return that he might show the Emperor, in confidence, the text of the Convention, (Goltz himself has not the secret clauses) and ask his advice as to whether the Convention should be communicated to the French cabinet or not. As far as I know the

\* The Empress Eugenie.

† Of February 8th, 1863, with Prussia.

Emperor he is very susceptible to such a proof of personal confidence. The reply proves at least that he does not intend to make more of the matter than public opinion in France necessitates.<sup>1</sup> Seeing how matters seem to be shaping themselves in Poland we shall hardly be called upon for active co-operation there, and the Convention thus gives us the advantage of having secured cheaply for the future the gratitude of the Czar Alexander and the Russian sympathy.

The English Ambassador has expressed to me the wish to have an audience of your Majesty before he leaves for Strelitz, that would be for to-morrow or the day after to-morrow, and I beg, therefore, for your Majesty's commands.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Andrew expressed at the same time the hope that your Majesty would dine with him on March 10th. In my most humble opinion this would constitute a serious precedent. The French Embassy would undoubtedly sooner or later find a pretext for soliciting a similar honour, and inconveniences of all kinds might arise.<sup>3</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> *Il la regrette* is always unpleasant.

<sup>2</sup> Sunday at 12 o'clock.

<sup>3</sup> As two balls or concerts have already been accepted by us at the English Ambassador Bloomfield's, the *diné* at the *Ambassador's* can hardly be declined, least of all on the wedding day of the Prince of Wales, and we have, therefore, already accepted it by word of mouth through the Crown Prince.

W.

February 20, '63.

B., February 25, '63.

I find in to-day's newspaper cuttings that Behrend\* partially disclaims the newspaper account of his interview

\* Vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies.



with you. As I do not know to which portions this refers I would only remark, in view of your answer to-morrow to the interpellation relative to Behrend's conversation:

If I understood you rightly, you would also touch the opinion "what Prussia could do if Russia should give up Poland."

Reference, however, to similar utterances which Czar Nicholas or even Czar Alexander II may be credited with having made does not appear to me admissible. Such utterances would immediately be *disclaimed* from St. Petersburg, as especially at this moment Russia's monarch *dare* not, even if he has made them, allow such utterances to become known, partly on account of his army which is engaged in fighting, and partly on account of the revolutionary party. Please, therefore, omit this allusion.

W.

24

B., February 26, '63.

You should also mention to-day how thankful our frontier inhabitants, Germans and Poles, are for the energetic measures of my Government, as the newspapers are blazing it abroad that the contrary took place. Our main object of the measures has thus been attained. No violations of the frontier have occurred (and in accordance with the latest regulations will not take place) then why all the clamour?

W.

25

B., March 5, '63.

Similarly to Count Goltz's telegram of to-day my son reports to me at the request of King Leopold that Queen

Victoria has, by her calm and discreet attitude, checked all the endeavours of France to win her over, and that he, the King, has also done his best hitherto to avert great dangers from us. That Napoleon's aim is the left bank of the Rhine, where he could easily throw 150,000 men. Budberg is said to have stated in Paris that Russia is ready to comply exclusively with N's wishes! (if it is true, it took place behind Czar A.'s back!) That King Leopold is indignant with Budberg. He advises besides that the Convention should be attributed to the standpoint of police measures, as we should otherwise have to pay for it with great sacrifices. The Empress Eugenie sympathises with the "good Rhinelanders." Napoléon a mordu dans cette question.—So far King L.

That the Convention is already little more than a police measure seems certain. I would still wish that the *executory instructions* could be modified, so that when everything is finally published the instructions may appear modified. I should think they could be re-constructed, seeing that no violations of the frontier occur, and that this could be demanded in Warsaw and St. Petersburg. We must discuss it with Roon and Alvensleben.

W.

26

B., March 13, '63.

We shall have to be very careful with Prince W. Baden, lest he finally come forward as *our* candidate\* and Prussia in the end be obliged to subvention him! I think we ought to hand over the matter to the guaranteeing powers.

The long-expected despatch from Goltz says, therefore, en deux mots: Buchanan has concealed the fact here that England has sent to *all* the Congress powers on the Polish

\* For the Greek throne (?)

question.\* Have we also already received this note? I do not know it; for the one read to you was intended only for us on account of the Convention and not for Russia.

W.

## 27

*March 17, '63.*

Just as half a century ago to-day Prussia's sons were summoned by my father who now rests with God to a spirited fight for the liberty of the Fatherland, I summoned you in the midst of peace to the fight for the fortifying of the throne and the Fatherland, a task which you fulfil with rare devotedness and perseverance. Receive in recognition of the services you have faithfully devoted to me, with my sincere thanks, on this Prussia's day of honour, the Grand Cross of my Order of the Red Eagle, the inscription† on which shall always be our device. Your

WILHELM R.

## 28

*BERLIN, March 18, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

will perhaps be interested in casting a glance over the enclosed telegrams received by me yesterday.<sup>1</sup>

I am doubtful whether I may give publicity to the contents of the exceedingly gracious Order with which your Majesty accompanied the decoration bestowed on me yesterday; I have not ventured to do so without your Majesty's authorisation, as I was not sure whether my judgment as to its being politically expedient would not be misled by my

\* In order to induce them to take a collective step of the Powers against Russia, that the conditions under which the Kingdom of Poland was assigned to her in 1815 by the Vienna Congress had not been fulfilled, but that the Constitution then promised and introduced had been again revoked in 1831.

† Sincere et constanter.

own feelings. If your Majesty so commands, I will have it put into print to-morrow.<sup>2</sup>

Will your Majesty be pleased to accept the renewed most respectful expression of my undying gratitude for the words with which your Majesty has so highly honoured me, and which my sons, God willing, will read again in later years with gladsome pride.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> I, too, have received some fifty such patriotic effusions.

<sup>2</sup> I think it would be better to have the letter appear in an outside newspaper, as official, in which case it may be regarded as an *indiscretion voulue*. W.

March 18, '63.

29

B., March 31, '63.

Minister Bodelschwingh has just told me that the *Vossische Zeitung* describes quite falsely an incident in the theatre, stating that the house broke out into long-continued applause when the words: "the Ministry is to be dismissed," were spoken.

The affair really turned into a thrilling scene for me, for at the words: "You know that I have the welfare of the people at heart," applause broke out which was so frequently repeated that I was about to stand up and bow my thanks.

It appears necessary to print this truth of the matter in a semi-official article *contra* "Voss." It would be well to look up the place in the last act of piece, the "Secret Agent,"\* and I wish to see the article. But hurry!

I am sorry to have missed you; Selchow and Bodelschwingh have told me everything, however. So the mountain has brought forth a mouse. W.

\* By Hackländer.

30

BERLIN, *March 31, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit the draft of a rectification in accordance with your Majesty's commands. If the wording meets with your Majesty's approval, the article could appear to-morrow morning in *Spener*.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Agreed, as alteration in conformity with *truth*. W.  
*March 31, '63.*

31

B., *April 16, '63.*

Princess Carl spoke to me, as she was leaving, of her project of calling at Paris on the way, and of paying a visit to the Court. I replied that I would let her know in due course *whether she had to show herself at the Court or not*. The moment has now arrived. I would, of course, have much preferred that the Princess Carl did not pass through Paris at all; as, however, she is going to Spain *without my* knowledge, the route back again *via* Paris is directly indicated. I wish, therefore, to hear your opinion, what you think of the visit to the Court. It must, in any case, be paid *at once*, and the incognito so preserved that no *din  * and other f  tes be accepted. W.

32

BERLIN, *April 16, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to point out that according to the telegram from Baron Werther and the communications of Count Karolyi, Austria, while negotiating with us as to the steps to be taken conjointly in Copenhagen, has, on its own behalf, despatched thither a very



sharply worded remonstrance. It is, on the whole, not inexpedient that Austria has proceeded so determinedly in this *anti-French* course; the impression of the co-operation with France in the Russian question is thereby neutralised. On the other hand, we were compelled to take care that Austria did not outbid us in the Danish question.<sup>1</sup> I have, therefore, after pointing out the insincerity of the Vienna attitude, arranged with Count Karolyi to hand in at Copenhagen the brief protest of the Bund, with which your Majesty is acquainted, in the shape of an identical note; besides this, however, each of the two Governments addresses to its Minister for communication a despatch drawn up in accordance with its special standpoint. As the Austrian despatch sent off on the 13th. inst. is, as already mentioned, couched in unexpectedly sharp terms, ours must also be of a resolute character.<sup>2</sup> I have also thought that the reply to be made to-morrow to the Twesten interpellation should be given another form, accentuating more strongly the joint procedure with Austria.<sup>3</sup> Both documents I beg most respectfully to enclose herewith.

In order completely to nullify the effect of Austria's previous action, which yesterday's Vienna newspapers already report, it would perhaps be advisable to read the enclosed despatch to Balan when replying to the interpellation to-morrow.<sup>4</sup> The Danish Cabinet has also published its decisions before they were communicated to us, and the Vienna despatch will undoubtedly appear in the newspapers to-day or to-morrow. I am only doubtful whether Austria will not yet find some pretext or other for abstaining from communicating *its* despatch to Copenhagen, letting us proceed alone with ours.<sup>5</sup> Austria's adoption of such a provocative attitude towards an affair which has France at the back of it, is most unexpected, and I would not have advised going so far *without* Austria and taking such a determined stand; *with* Austria it is, in view of the whole European constella-

tion, very desirable.<sup>6</sup> I should prefer therefore, on account of this mistrust of Vienna, to defer the publication of our despatch and its presentation in Copenhagen until Austria has got in advance with both, and is unable to draw back.<sup>7</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Quite right.

<sup>2</sup> Quite right.

<sup>3</sup> Quite right.

<sup>4</sup> ?

<sup>5</sup> Careful!

<sup>6</sup> Certainly.

<sup>7</sup> Yes. W.

I quite agree with the proposals and the despatch. I, too, think it would be *more prudent* not to read the despatch to-morrow; it is, moreover, contrary to the usual practice to publish such things before they are presented. Whether it would not also be well to date the despatch to Balan the 15th, as Sydow stated to-day that we also *had already* spoken at Copenhagen.

In your projected reply to-morrow I miss only a reference to the Schleswig question, as you are merely to speak: "of the duty imposed by honour to defend the rights of the *German Duchies*." Could not allusion be made to what the *agreements* of '51 and '52 contain about Schleswig? and that these conditions had to be made and would be made.

W.

April 16, '63.

As, according to Balan's telegram of yesterday, our note has been presented, the time has come when it may be published, which you wanted to do even *avant la lettre*? Austria is made fast by the note she has also presented. We must

now be on our guard not to be drawn into a warlike conflict there *without* Austria; this might be her object in order to *éparpiller* us if more extensive military operations ensued. I find that *our* press does not speak firmly and loudly enough in the Danish question, so that the opposition press is saying already that we are *not serious* in the matter, everyone must be disabused of this idea. WILHELM.

## 34

B., April 29, '63.

As the Czar Alexander this year also, so far as I know, invited our *Ambassador to dinner* on my birthday, and as this is always done, and as my deceased brother did similarly, the question is whether I ought not to give a dinner (with or without attachés?) to Oubril to-morrow, to which the Princes in Russian uniform, you, Schleinitz, Redern, and Russians now in Berlin could be invited. Do you think that this would cause too great a sensation at the *present* moment? In that case I would invite only Adlerberg,\* Grimm and a few others. Reply by bearer. W.

A dinner could not be given to-day, the 29th., on account of its being Busstag.†

## 35

B., April 30, '63.

Enclosed reports by Horn prove that it is a case of high treason. The only question is of the arrest of Guttry and Dzialynsky, members of the Chamber. If Count Lippe thinks that this cannot be done without the sanction of the Second Chamber, come with him to me at once, or if you

\* Count Nicholas Adlerberg, Russian Military Attaché in Berlin.

† The day annually set apart in Germany for prayer and repentance. (Translator's note.)

think it better, let the Council meet here at 1 o'clock, so that the motion to sanction the arrest of its two members may be brought before the Second Chamber immediately, if possible to-day, by an extraordinary convocation of the House. Haste is necessary, and secrecy, so that the House may be surprised. If it does not permit the arrest it participates in the high treason.

WILHELM.

## 36

B., May 7, '63.

Count Kanitz has just told me that the secretary of the Evangelical Alliance has been informed by telegraph that three days ago the evangelicals were condemned in Madrid to the galleys for nine and seven years respectively, and that an English deputation leaves London *to-morrow* for Madrid, for which place also Austrian, Dutch, etc., have already started. I can on no account allow Prussia, the greatest Evangelical State, to remain unrepresented, and if nothing else is possible Kanitz must go as *special* envoy, though of course I have said nothing to him about it. The matter is very urgent and I should like to have your proposals.

W.

Would it not be better not to send my two private letters direct to Rechberg, but to Werther, in order that he may take an opportunity of producing them as a sequel to your letter to Rechberg?

## 37

BERLIN, May 14, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to announce that I am unfortunately prevented by an attack of rheumatic pains from leaving my room. We have to-day sent a negative answer to an invitation from President Grabow to be present at the

sitting to-morrow. I will send your Majesty the copy of it during the day. Otherwise the situation is unchanged since yesterday.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

To-morrow I am at Potsdam for the exercising, and will await intelligence from you whether and when you wish to speak to me *here*, or whether, considering the state of your health, I can come to you.

The address project borders on the incredible!!

In any case I shall be back here to-morrow at 3 o'clock.

W.

May 14, '63.

## 38

BERLIN, May 20, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I venture most respectfully to ask for news of your Majesty's health, and humbly to enquire whether it will be possible for me to appear in person in the course of the day, in order to make a brief report to your Majesty on a single subject.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Perhaps towards the evening, but I will let you know. Presumably it is about the projected message. The enclosure shows me there is a difference. I cannot, therefore, decide without hearing the others! All the votes would no doubt be for an adjournment? I too.

W.

May 20, '63.

## 39

B., May 30, '63.

There is much that is good in the marked leading article, but it must be answered by Brasz's newspaper \* with the question: Who rendered the programme of Nov. 8th, '58, impossible? Answer: The Chamber of progress which

\* The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.



overthrew the Hohenzollern Ministry. When quiet has been restored, the programme will be taken up again by me and carried out, for the programme, now as heretofore, contains my confession of faith. That is the origin, too, of the view I expressed yesterday that I wish to see dictates\* joined with propitiatory steps.

W.

40

Bbg. (BABELSBERG), *June 7, '63.*

Enclosed I return the document I asked for. I request you to communicate the same to the Ministers, that the gentlemen may see how the revelations now made by the opposition absolutely bear out the estimate I formed of them!

W.

My reason for desiring to look into this document was that I might obtain fresh material for my opinion that we must bring in the recruits *this* year on the *old date*, October 1st., if indeed we maintain peace until then. That war is more than threatening for the coming year seems clear, the army *must*, therefore, be in fighting order by April. As the budget fixes the bringing in of the recruits for Febr. 15th, the requisite sum must be asked for in an extraordinary vote. The Minister for Finance must make his arrangements accordingly.

W.

41

(*July 12, '63.*)†

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit a communication I have just received from Rouher respecting the taking of Mexico, and a report from Rothschild.

V. BISMARCK.

\* Refers to the Press regulations of June 1, 1863. .

† Original undated.

Remark in the King's handwriting:

He is fortunate!

In Bismarck's handwriting underneath:

Pourvu que cela dure?

(Enclosure.)

CONSEIL D'ETAT.  
CABINET DU MINISTRE  
PRÉSIDENT

CARLSBAD, le 11 Juillet, '63.

Mon cher monsieur

permettez-moi de communiquer à Votre Excellence la nouvelle que je reçois par télégramme de Paris "la ville de Mexico vient de se rendre aux troupes françaises."

agréez, mon cher monsieur, l'assurance de mes sentiments de haute considération.

E. ROUHER.

42

CARLSBAD, July 14, '63.

I have just read the enclosed with the article from the *Weser Zeitung* which contains an *accurate* reproduction of my correspondence with my son!! As I kept no copy of my letter to my son I could not communicate it to the Ministry of State, which, therefore, has only a *general acquaintance* with its contents from my official message. I must thus take it for granted that there has been no indiscretion in *that* quarter. I desire you, therefore, to have enquiries made as to who has supplied the *Weser Zeitung* with these memoranda, which are too *accurate* to be inventions.

W.

Please return the enclosures *immediately*.

43

BADEN, August 23, '63.

In the enclosed letter my son expresses himself quite in favour of the non-acceptance of the second invitation to

Frankfurt. On the other hand he reverts, in an enclosed second memorandum, to the Presidency of the Statistical Congress. You have not yet made any report to me in reference to Eulenburg's memorandum on this question, which it is true assumes quite another aspect by the retirement of Schulze-D(elitzsch) and Virchow. Nevertheless, the *whole thing* appears to me calculated to make my son an un-essential figure *vis-à-vis* myself; if Eulenburg's plan that I should receive the Congress is accepted, I find my son's protectorate no longer necessary.

I could see you between 1 and 2 o'clock.

On the back of my son's first memorandum is my answer.  
W.

## 44

(Telegram.)

PALACE AT BABELSBERG, *September 6, '66, 10.50 A. M.*

To Minister-President v. Bismarck  
Berlin.

With sincere sympathy \* I grant the leave of absence.  
WILHELM.

## 45

KÜLZ, near NAUGARD, *September 30, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I most respectfully report that I have made arrangements at the Ministry for the more interesting despatches to be forwarded to your Majesty in the original, and that for the few days I shall remain in Pomerania copies or extracts shall be sent on to me only when the Under-Secretary needs my opinion. I expect to be back in Berlin in a week, and to proceed from there, as business will allow, to Baden to make a verbal report. Circumstances came to my

\* On the death of his mother-in-law, Frau v. Puttkamer.

knowledge in Berlin yesterday which lead me to suppose that Prince Gortschakoff and Oubril, acting on the former's instructions, take a less benevolent attitude towards our internal questions than would correspond to Czar Alexander's personal intentions, and that Oubril's reports are drawn up accordingly. Perhaps the matter is appropriate for a cautious reference in your Majesty's reply to the Czar,<sup>1</sup> the draft for which I will, agreeably to your Majesty's commands, submit at Baden.

The election prospects in this division are favourable; my brother, who is acting as election *commissar*, believes that the two seats will be won by the Conservative candidates from the Progressists. Our chief opponent is the Director of the district court, who uses all his official authority with the peasants against the Government. Your Majesty will gather from the following how far these people can let their conceit carry them. Your Majesty had most graciously promised<sup>2</sup> me the pardon of a Schultze\* named Brummund, who was sentenced to twenty-four hours' imprisonment for not properly guarding a vagabond, and who is the leader of the loyal peasants in the division who vote against the election of the Director of the court. Although the Minister of Justice has provisionally inhibited the execution of the sentence, the Director is shamefaced enough to have it spread among the peasants that the King can pardon nobody except on the motion of the court, and that the peasants would see by the ultimate success who had more power over them, the court or the Government. In order to intimidate the country people, the court messengers and bailiffs are employed in prosecuting the liberal agitation and in distributing pamphlets while they go their rounds on official business. In this state of affairs the pardoning of Brummund will be of determinative importance on the result of the elections here and in the neighbourhood,

\* A Schultze holds in a German village the position held by a Mayor in an English town. (Translator's note.)

and I beg to recommend it again to your Majesty's consideration if it should in the meantime be submitted to your Majesty, so that it may be clear to the peasants that the district judges tell them an untruth when they state that even your Majesty's prerogative of mercy rests in their hands.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Very necessary.

<sup>2</sup> Shall be done.

W.

46

BABELSBERG, *November 7, '63.*

Enclosed I send you the answer to my son the Crown Prince to his memorandum of September last. For your better information I send you again the memorandum, and your notes which I used for my reply. You will also receive to-day the communication for the Ministry of State without any authentication. If you wish to communicate to your colleagues the enclosure to *this* letter, please do so, and return me everything before I leave for Letzlingen, as the Queen knows nothing of it yet.

Your

WILHELM.

47

BERLIN, *November 16, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to be allowed to join a shooting party given to-morrow by the Minister for Finance between Rummelsburg and Köpenick. If your Majesty commands, I shall be back at 4 o'clock to make my report, in any case I shall be in town again at 5.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Please do not keep to the fourth hour.

W.



48

B., November 27, '63.

The Bund has directed Hanover as well as Saxony to furnish 6,000 men, but it has absolutely no right to attach *conditions* to the carrying out of the order conveyed to it. If, therefore, Saxony does not voluntarily undertake the second 6,000 men, Hanover must be *compelled* by the Diet to do its duty. It is another question whether Prussia and Austria shall now put their army on a war footing; I should regard it as a sign of weakness towards Hanoverian pretensions were Prussia and Austria to furnish the 6,000 men in question. As the matter is urgent, Moltke's letter is dated the 25th., I await your view early to-morrow morning.

WILHELM

 $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10.

49

B., November 28, '63.

The confusion becomes greater and greater! Why does Austria furnish 6,000 men, as Saxony and Hanover, or Hesse-Darmstadt, furnish all that has as yet been demanded of them? What are 6,000 Austrians and 6,000 Prussians to do? They are too *few* if opposition is expected, and too *many* for the execution of the order. And Prussia cannot remain behind if Austria furnishes them. We shall, therefore, have to show our readiness to do this, although the above consideration should be mentioned. So the majority has its way! What next?

When do you wish to speak to me to-morrow, *before* or *after* church, which begins at 11 o'clock, and lasts until at least 1 o'clock.

W.

## 50

BERLIN, *November 30, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg to submit to your Majesty the enclosed two telegrams, with the most humble suggestion that your Majesty might be pleased most graciously to authorise me, in availing myself of the doubt expressed by Lord Russell as to the utility of our participation in Copenhagen, to telegraph to Vienna: we agree to the proposal to bring influence to bear on Copenhagen, but in concurrence with England consider it more advisable if the two German great powers abstain for the present from co-operating in the step.

I do not believe Lord Russell will remain long in this opinion, expedition is necessary, therefore, in order to turn it to account in Vienna.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Quite agree, and if Vienna agrees, explain our position quickly to London and St. Petersburg.

WILHELM.

B., *November 30, '63.*

## 51

B., *December 1, '63.*

You should read the leading article in the *Spener Zeitung* before the sitting, as it seems to me very reasonable and calm. In any case I desire that in the course of the discussion you will not express the view that, for certain reasons, an independent Holstein does not commend itself to you—as this is not my opinion—for which reason I recommend great caution, as the matter is too serious and too great to let one's self be bound by a word.

W.

Herewith a *raisonnement* of my son's.

BERLIN, *December 1, '63.*

## YOUR MAJESTY

was graciously pleased to send me Herr von Gruner's letter of the 28th ultimo, and to remark that your Majesty's own standpoint was reproduced in it. The views of Herr von Gruner proceed from the same general conception as those of Herr von Vincke and Herr von Roggenbach, which latter find expression in the letter of his Royal Highness the Grand-Duke of Baden. These gentlemen, in addressing their proposals to your Majesty, undoubtedly presume that in the event of their advice being followed, your Majesty would also summon another Ministry. To accomplish this aim in itself there are now, as heretofore, apart from *public* life, other influences at work, to which, voluntarily or involuntarily, Herr von Schleinitz (with other persons closely connected with the Court) devotes his services.

When I joined the Ministry I took the liberty of explaining to your Majesty that I conceive my position as being not that of a constitutional Minister in the ordinary sense of the word, but that of your Majesty's servant, to comply with your Majesty's commands in the last instance, even when these do not correspond with my personal views. My standpoint is still the same to-day, but this must not restrain me from explaining my view with the candour which I owe to your Majesty and to the country's interests.

In this sense I must at first state that I regard it in the interest of your Majesty's service as necessary, in order to carry out a policy corresponding with the views of Herr von Gruner, to choose another Ministry, or at any rate another Minister for Foreign Affairs, possessing to a higher degree than I the confidence of the elements on which such a policy must be based. Count Goltz has hitherto had no occasion to come in conflict with these elements, and by

virtue of his other capabilities should be particularly qualified to take over the affairs.

V. BISMARCK.

## 53

BERLIN, *December 3, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit two reports on the firmer attitude of the Bourse to-day.

The election of Minister von der Heydt has been declared invalid.<sup>1</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Very unpleasant for him especially.

## 54

B., *December 3, '63.*

Among the documents you left behind yesterday were two Police reports, signed by names unknown to me, treating of intrigues here among the lower classes of the population and of prospective manifestations as the result of the same. As, since the death of Joel Jacoby,\* the daily police reports I receive contain *nothing* but newspaper cuttings, and absolutely no *indications* of the local feeling, your communications were as important as surprising to me. As I must be informed at the present moment of what is being done and is happening in the Residence, will you arrange with Count Eulenburg in what manner I am to be informed daily of such occurrences. Not knowing whether you daily receive such intelligence as that you gave me the day before yesterday, I also do not know if this suffices at the present time, in any case the simplest thing would be for you to send me immediately all the information reaching you. In March, 1848, I had a daily report from the—ominous—

\* It has been found impossible to trace this personality.

Minutoli—and then went with him daily to the King. I have already told Bernuth \* verbally to come to me at any moment when there is anything of importance to communicate. Would it not be well to place the supervision over the Residence-machinations in intelligent, circumspect, and—cunning—hands, so that we do not, as in 1848, remain unguarded? W.

55

B., December 4, '63.

12 o'clock noon.

Only yesterday evening I read two surprises in the newspapers:

1. That the Bundestag meets to-morrow,
2. That the King of Denmark has promulgated the constitution in Schleswig!!

I was just writing to you when I received the enclosed telegram from the Grand-Duke of Oldenburg, giving prominence to point 2. I quite agree with the Grand-Duke that by this promulgation the *non*-fulfilment of one of our demands becomes an accomplished fact. The second demand with respect to Holstein is, as we have publicly declared, most closely connected with that one which now, in spite of our *réserve* in the Bundestag, is *définitif* rejected. It appears to me, therefore, that, as one *without* the other cannot result in our acknowledgment of the succession in Holstein, the whole affair is removed to a fresh field, and the question is whether we and Austria are not now justified in substituting the word occupation for *exécution*, leaving the succession to a future settlement, that is to say we could agree to the second clause of the Saxon amendment? We must occupy a German country which is in a state of fermentation until a succession dispute is adjusted, which succession is, in our opinion, to fall to Christian IX, pro-

\* President of Police in Berlin.



vided he fulfils two preliminary conditions which cannot be thought of apart. The Grand-Duke of Oldenburg is quite right, now it is a matter of *exécution*, acknowledgment of King Christian IX in Holstein; that was \* our standpoint before the *promulgation questionée*; after the same it is so no longer.

Let me know verbally by bearer when you will come to me, as we must confer about to-morrow at Frankfurt and about these letters. W.

## 56

BERLIN, December 6, '63.

Your marginal notes to the enclosed despatch from Balan with respect to the consummation of the new Danish constitution in Schleswig go much further than the verbal statements you have hitherto made to me. Balan says, and in my opinion quite rightly, that the constitution is signed, and published as law, and no special ceremony is to be made of its coming into force on January 1st, although I have—unfortunately—admitted that we have still to wait until January 1st, before considering ourselves released from the London treaty—you say in those marginal notes that the old constitution remains in force until a new assembly of deputies is elected. Balan says the contrary, and you told me that we ought not to consent to this being postponed *ad infinitum*. Then you write *ad marginem* that we should also demand the dismissal of the Ministry and the discontinuance of the system—quite right—but when? Surely not before the invasion? but after?? W.

My adjutant, v. Strubberg, has just told me that at yesterday's *assemblée* Buchanan spoke of a telegram, according to which Christian IX has withdrawn the ordinances of March 30th??

\* Twice underlined in the original.

BERLIN, *December 8, '63.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit a Police report, the printed compilation of the documents relating to the London treaty as commanded, and the telegrams received up to the present. In my most humble opinion it seems expedient to maintain our attitude towards Irminger \* also outwardly in conformity with that of Austria. It is awkward that Sydow is charged with the report of the committee in the Bundestag, for we shall thus always have to make our declaration first, and before Austria; if your Majesty does not command otherwise I will leave him without instructions on this point, and await to-morrow's committee issues, as the next measure, the letter to Copenhagen, will not be thereby delayed.

The final sentence of the Vienna telegram, that Christian IX rules also in Copenhagen only by virtue of the London treaty, is not quite right; he rules there because the legitimate heir, Prince Friedrich of Hesse, has resigned in his favour. This legal title, which is in itself sufficient, has only been *confirmed* by the London treaty, and then extended to the Duchies.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Prince Friedrich resigned merely in order that the London treaty in favour of Christian IX might be effectuated.

W.

*December 8, '63.*

\* Admiral Irminger was charged with the task of notifying in Berlin and Vienna Christian IX.'s accession to the throne; he was granted no audience in Berlin, and left that city on the 5th. for Vienna as, in Bismarck's opinion, the Emperor would more easily receive him than the King of Prussia could.

58

BERLIN, December 10, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour, as I am prevented by indisposition from leaving my room, most respectfully to report in writing that we are awaiting<sup>1</sup> only the arrival of the note addressed by Austria to Copenhagen, in order to forward the same immediately with ours. We have already come to an understanding with Hanover, and I expect the same from Dresden by telegraph to-day.

The French Ambassador \* read me a despatch to-day in which France now proposes a "*congrès restreint*," without England, to be held by the foreign Ministers. He places the Danish question in the foreground, and similarly accentuates the right of national endeavours and of the treaties. I am now having copies made of the document and will lay it before your Majesty in the course of to-day.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Not yet arrived! It is quite inexcusable.

<sup>2</sup> Received! The matter seems to me utterly unfeasible, so long as England does not take part in it. How is, for instance, the Holstein question, on account of the London treaty, to be solved *without* England? Understanding with Vienna and St. Petersburg is the first thing. How hostile would England be towards us all if we arranged things with France *without* her!! W.

December 12, '63.

59

BERLIN, December 11, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to announce to your Majesty that, according to a Vienna telegram, the Austrian notification

\* Baron de Talleyrand.

to Denmark of the resolution\* of the Bund leaves Vienna this evening. It tallies exactly with ours, and as soon as it arrives here to-morrow both will be at once despatched to Copenhagen. Ours is executed and lies ready.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

So far as I can remember, there is no allusion in the *pièce questionnée* to the evacuation of Holstein and of the entry of troops. When will this demand be made? I wish to see the so-called ratification once more. W.

December 11, '63.

60

BERLIN, December 11, '63.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour to submit a despatch sent on the 8th inst. to the greater courts and an article which appeared in yesterday's *Norddeutsche Zeitung*. In both the untruths are refuted which Minister Hall, and with him the local democratic press have circulated with regard to the negotiations conducted before the death of King Friedrich on the subject of the Danish disclaimer of the Holstein contribution to the joint budget.

In compliance with your Majesty's orders I am having the declarations I shall make to Lord Wodehouse put in writing, will submit the same to-day to your Majesty for approval, and will express myself to Wodehouse in exact accord therewith.

As I see again by your Majesty's marginal note to my yesterday's letter on the subject of the French proposal that your Majesty is, as heretofore, desirous of having the existing good relations with England, Russia, and Austria maintained,<sup>1</sup> and that your Majesty does not entertain the idea of a French alliance, we must, in my most humble opinion, avail ourselves of the mission of such an influential states-

\* Of December 7, with respect to Holstein and Lauenburg.

man as Lord Wodehouse to foster our English relations. If we undertake the solution of the Danish question in contrariety with England and Russia, without at the same time assuring our relation to France, the difficulties of the situation will easily exceed our powers. I beg most respectfully that your Majesty will be gracious enough to receive Lord Wodehouse, so as not at once to deprive him of the hopes set by England on the result of the Copenhagen negotiations.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> From this arrangement of words I must assume that you are *for* the restricted congress, and would even like to see an alliance with France result from the same?? Certainly I wish to have the good relations with the three other great powers maintained, only not at the expense of Holstein-Schleswig.

W.

*December 11, '63.*

Postscript by the King:

Wolff \* claims to know already that the majority of the Ministers is for the adjournment of the constitution! In that case all my hopes of seeing the Duchies independent are frustrated!!

61

B., *December 17, '63.*

If it should really come to a Danish Conference in Paris what is it to take as a basis for its discussions?

I have just read the Address.† The worst is that it wishes what I also wish in my heart and yet cannot say *pure* to the House either through you to-morrow or in my reply. Could you come to me to-morrow for a moment before the sitting to talk over this point, *i. e.* how far you can go in your to-morrow's speech.

W.

\* The semi-official News Agency.    † Of the Chamber of Deputies.



B., December 22, '63.

I quite agree with Rechberg's argumentation, why must the Schleswig question be brought up now, as also that we must finally decide to choose one of the thorny ways. None of those proposed, however, pleases me.

I do not think it possible to fix a new term after January 1st if the constitution were to be regarded as not being inaugurated on that day, as we have waited long enough, but not to come to war with the integrity powers, for that is one of the thorns!

I regard it as very inadvisable to build our plan on the conference, as it exposes us for the second time to the *horreur* of a (London, now perhaps Paris) protocol and thus all hopes for the better blighted; on the other hand the conference might be held as an *auxiliaire*, also to keep Np.\* III in a good temper! A military occupation of Schleswig is war, and war with a very bloody beginning: the crossing of the Eider. Before this can happen we must have a large army; that takes months of time, especially if the enthusiastic South Germans are to be there. But what will happen before then?

So I decide for this eventuality! the question is only: *with* or *without* renunciation of the London Protocol! That we have thoroughly discussed, and both eventualities are now to be deliberated on in Vienna. I am quite in accord with recalling the Ministers after January 1st. *en cas que*.—but not with a fresh last demand—when shall we have the last final one of all?? It is necessary, therefore, that an understanding be speedily arrived at, and the South Germans notified that they are to mobilise with 50,000 men. Perhaps that will cool the ardour of the gymnasts.

W.

\*The Emperor Napoleon III.

## 63

B., December 26, '63.

Although I am very glad that Denmark speaks of such an energetic war tone on the part of Prussia, I do not understand it, as we (unfortunately) have not yet spoken so resolutely? Perhaps it refers to our conversations with Wodehouse or Ewers? In any case those were no official *démarches*, and yet the despatch says: "England, Russia, and Sweden would have promised no help to such a declaration on the part of Prussia." *Enfin, il paraît que nous avons fait de la pose sans le savoir!* Also good! To-day a letter has come from Duke Carl of Glücksburg with quite a new proposal.

The proposition I made yesterday is based chiefly on my desire to—so to say—rehabilitate my deceased brother in respect of his letter of 1848 to the Duke of Augustenburg\* and his signature to the London Treaty!

For although the Treaty destroys the succession itself, it does not destroy the right to the same if it is, as now, revived, and is demanded by all Germany. Therefore I believe that Prussia, if it wishes to satisfy itself of this right during the discussion at Frankfurt, will have to pronounce for the same, and for that reason have to state (with Austria) that it demands a conference in order to modify the treaty with the contracting powers, i. e. Ch. IX remains King in Denmark; but the Primkenauer† succeeds in the Duchies. That is my *raisonnement* to the situation.

W.

\* King Frederick William IV. promised in his letter of March 24, 1848, to protect the three principles of the Schleswig-Holstein public law: "The Duchies are independent States, they are closely united States, the male line rules in them."

† The hereditary Prince Friedrich of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustenburg.

64

BERLIN, *January 9, '64.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit the despatches which have been kept back to-day, and in writing the question put to me early this morning by the English Ambassador in respect of the conferences.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

We shall see Austria back out one day!

W.

65

B., *January 16, '64.*

My son came to me this evening to submit to me the request of the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg that I would accept a letter from him at the hands of Herr Samwer, and whether I would not for this purpose go to his *soirée* where I could, quite unobserved, find the said S. in a secluded room. This I declined until I had read the Prince's letter, and accordingly directed my son to send it to me. He has now done so, and I enclose the letter. There is nothing dangerous in it, except at the end where he asks me if I cannot give the said S. some hope. Perhaps you could have an answer prepared for me by to-morrow that I can give into the charge of the said S. Even if I should see him incognito at my son's, I could give him no other hopes than are indicated in the provisional agreement, i. e., that after victory it would be seen that new bases for the future were to be found, and to await the verdict in Frankfurt as to the succession.

W.

66

B., *January 18, '64.*

I inform you that after all I decided to see Samwer at my son's, about six to ten minutes in the latter's presence. I

spoke to him quite in the sense of the projected answer, but somewhat more coolly and very seriously. Above all I said explicitly that in no case must the Prince invade Schleswig. More by word of mouth. W.

## 67

B., January 19, '64.

Enclosed I send you a page of the A. A. Ztg.\* which my brother Carl has just had forwarded to me on account of an article it contains on a memorial from Usedom to the late King on the Danish question.

My brother desires that this article may be contradicted; only Usedom could do this, and, of course, he will never do it if he presented the memorial, which appears to be certain as he foretells *exactly* what has now happened after the dreadful London treaty. Please return me the page.

I have not slept the whole night for thinking of your yesterday's outline of the despatch for Dresden and Hanover. Send it me again, as I am so imbued with the belief that the succession question, which has been kept too far in the background, will cost me many anxious hours if it is not modified, as I told you definitely yesterday. I still regard this as the first alternative, the personal union follows. Suggest yourself how the despatch can be modified to suit my meaning. W.

## 68

B., January 22, '64.

Prince Friedrich Karl writes me, what we have, however, already learned from Hamburg, that just as is the case there, no notice has been given in Lubeck and Oldenburg that our troops would pass through, which has an unfavourable effect, although this has not had the slightest influence on the

\* The *Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung*.

reception in Lubeck. Telegraphic advices might still be sent to Lubeck and Eutin that fresh passages of troops will take place during the next few days; also to Oldenburg. Is this to be done through the Foreign or the War Office?  
W.

BERLIN, *January 26, '64.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I most respectfully beg your Majesty most graciously to permit the Ministers von Bodelschwingh, von Roon, Count Eulenburg, and me to join a shooting party which the Minister for Finance intends to give between the town and Köpenick, on the right bank of the Spree.<sup>1</sup>

I most humbly thank your Majesty for this evening's communication, and have forwarded it to Roon. The complaint to the Bund is a step without practical significance, especially as the application addressed to Oldenburg for permission for the passage of the troops, and to which no reply has yet been received, fully recognises the sovereign prerogatives.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Very willingly.

BERLIN, *February 2, '64.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have just received your Majesty's letter of this evening, on my return from the French Ambassador's ball.

Count Karolyi had received an answer from Vienna this evening proposing a quite new and more extended conception for the second clause, according to which the whole question whether we could dissociate ourselves would be *du domaine de la conférence*. I considered this unacceptable, and insisted on the version, which your Majesty had



approved this morning, and which Count Karolyi had already accepted this morning and telegraphed to Vienna. He adopted it finally, at my explicit request, and notified this to Vienna. I also replied to Sir A. Buchanan, who again urgently questioned me this evening, that we were agreed with Vienna on a version which we would telegraph to London to-morrow morning.<sup>1</sup>

It is thus very difficult to alter anything in the matter, and hardly possible to come to an understanding in time with Austria, with respect to an alteration.\* I beg most respectfully for your Majesty's commands as to the time at which the Council shall meet to-morrow.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Has not been done yet? as I now fix the Council for 12 o'clock.

<sup>2</sup> 12 o'clock.

W.

February 3, '64.

71

BERLIN, February 26, '64.

YOUR MAJESTY

was graciously pleased yesterday to command a joint statement with respect to the report from head-quarters of the attack on Düppel. If your Majesty approves of its taking place to-day at 4 o'clock, I would inform the Minister of War and General von Moltke, otherwise I beg most respectfully for your Majesty's commands as to another time.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

As it appears to me that we can come to absolutely no decisions until we have an answer from the west as to what can be expected from the negotiations respecting con-

\* Identical despatches were handed by Prussia and Austria to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in London on Feb. 4th.

ferences, armistice or not, with or without Alsen, a conference is premature, so that I should not like to fix it *to-day*. If you must come alone at 4, we can still speak about it. W.

February 26, '64.

## 72

B., April 4, '64.

The newspapers speak of a celebration of March 31st.\* in St. Petersburg, which has given offence in Paris. Has Count Redern reported nothing about it? As a matter of fact I have not read a syllable from St. Petersburg for weeks. As Loën† is not there I learn nothing whatever through Redern about the Imperial family. W.

## 73

B., April 16, '64.

I have not slept half the night on account of our answer to Paris! The first point which made me uneasy is that we forgot to discuss Goltz's statement as to what Napoleon understands by "requital"? although the rectification of the Rhine frontier is, maliciously enough, adumbrated. What view have you yourself formed on it, and have you said anything to Talleyrand on the subject? If not, this must be made a chief point in the despatch to Goltz which may in no case be left undiscussed.

2. Goltz writes: If ‡ *la consultation du vœu national* should be in Prussia's favour, then etc., etc. According to that this consultation has not yet been held in Paris. If, however, it decides for the Augustenburger, as is quite natural, and has really been done in the last few days, how can the other plan be brought forward? The consultation must, however, be supported by *us* above all, as we have

\* The fiftieth anniversary of the capitulation of Paris.

† Prussian Military Attaché at St. Petersburg.

‡ Twice underlined in the original.

adhered to it even against Austria. How is the Paris plan then at all possible?

3. I repeat that this plan will coalesce *all* against us, for it drives the Middle Germans into the Austrian camp as they see in this policy of annexation their nightmare realised for the first time after 50 years, and therefore will behold their fate in it. Thus Austria, Germany, England and Russia must be against us, and we stand *alone* and united *only* with the arch-enemy and the inscrutable leader of the same?? That is more dangerous!

Have you already put your communications to Talleyrand in writing, as a basis for a despatch to Goltz? If so, bring the same with you to-day at 3.30. W.

## 74

BERLIN, May 23, '64.

My son, the Crown Prince, has handed me the enclosed. It contains the wish of Field-Marshal Count Wrangel to have capital advanced to him in order to purchase the Wrangelsburg estate in Neu Vor-Pommern, and to settle it in entail. You will see from the contents of the letter that my deceased brother awakened this idea in the Field-Marshal's mind. Now that the latter has conducted the glorious campaign to an armistice, and I am prepared to consider his wish for greater repose on account of his advanced age, I am of opinion that the Field-Marshal's desire would be best realised if the Wrangelsburg estate were made over to him as an endowment in recognition of his long services to the Fatherland. I therefore herewith commission you to take this idea immediately into consideration, and in the first place to make enquiries of Count Bismarck-Bohlen whether Wrangelsburg is for sale, and what the purchase price would be, further steps could then be taken accordingly.

WILHELM.

75

B., May 28, '64, 9 P. M.

Do you wish the rendezvous with the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg, proposed by my son in the enclosure, to take place incognito, or shall it be quite official? In view of the Oldenburg intermezzo, some caution is necessary, so that we do not commit too great a mistake. Reply by bearer. W.

76

BLANKENBURG, October 29, '64.

You will know about Rechberg-Mensdorff by telegram. That § 25 did not cause Rechberg's downfall proves that our decision was not waited for. We can congratulate ourselves in Mensdorff, although he lacks Rechberg's versatility.

The Emperor F. J.'s letter is very reassuring, and no question of § 25. On the other hand, all the other enclosures again point to this concession vis-à-vis Mensdorff! The refusal to include reciprocity in the peace document on account of the nationalities is significant enough!! I hope to find the peace signed to-morrow; I am only sorry that yours will not be among the signatures! Your

W.

77

BERLIN, November 14, '64.

Herewith I send you the insignia of the high Order of the Black Eagle, the bestowal of which on you I announced this morning after I had signed the treaty of peace with Denmark in your house.

The rare circumspection, perseverance, and energy with which for two years you have, under my direction, led the Government, and especially the successful activity you have displayed for a year past in dealing with the great

work which is now accomplished—give you full title to be invested with this high Order.

Through your assistance I have succeeded in establishing Prussia politically and militarily firmly in the position which Providence assigned to her. Without fighting there is no victory! We too have learned this in many relations. Fightings there will ever be, may the victory always be ours!

May the Black Eagle bring you my thanks and may he ever soar high!

Your faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

To

The Minister-President, von Bismarck.

78

BERLIN, *December 18, '64.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I respectfully report that I have communicated your Majesty's orders to the Field-Marshal verbally. The latter used the opportunity to request me to suggest to your Majesty the question of an amnesty. If it is your Majesty's intention to agree to this, I would most respectfully submit the advisability of in some way intimating publicly that an act of grace is contemplated in connection with to-day's ceremony. What categories are to be pardoned could be left entirely unspecified, so as to allow of a previous examination in due course of business with a view to preparing matters for your Majesty's definite decision.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Agreed, and will you submit to me an order in this sense, so that it may appear, with to-day's date, in to-morrow's *Staats-Anzeiger*

W.

*December 18, '64.*



79

B., December 18, '64.

The question was raised yesterday as to what toasts should be given at to-day's *diné*, and whether Wrangel or you should reply to me. I almost think it is more *dignified* at a peace festivity for me to speak *quite alone* on the peace, with references to what Austria has done, to the army and to the Fatherland.

Do come to me about this after the service.

W.

80

BERLIN, December 24, '64.

## TO YOUR MAJESTY

I tender my most respectful and warmest thanks \* for having graciously thought of me to-day. May God give me as much strength as I have will to wield the staff, the symbol of which your Majesty has presented to me to-day as a life-long, precious memento, in fulfilment of your Majesty's purposes to the welfare of our Fatherland. I have undoubting trust in God that your Majesty's staff will blossom in the German land like Aaron's rod did, according to the 14th. chapter of Numbers, and that if the necessity arises it will be changed into the serpent which swallows up the other rods, as it is related in the 7th. chapter of Exodus. I beg your Majesty to excuse this reference, as being prompted by my grateful feelings. Within view of the Christmas festival I feel the need of assuring your Majesty that my fidelity and obedience to the master whom

\* For the Christmas present of a stick, which the King accompanied with a letter now lost. According to the *Kreuz Zeitung* of Jan. 11, 1865, his Majesty wrote that he sent the Minister this stick in order that, when looking at the wreath, he might always be reminded that it was he who planted the laurel leaves.

God has placed over me on earth rest on the same firm foundation as my faith.

In deepest veneration and unwavering fidelity,

Your Majesty's

Most humble servant till death,

V. BISMARCK.

## 81

BERLIN, *February 4, '65.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour, as I am unfortunately not allowed to go out to-day also, most respectfully to submit the despatches which have come to hand.

With regard to the report on the new army list, commanded by your Majesty for to-morrow after the service, I have spoken provisionally with Count Redern, Baron Schleinitz and Count Stillfried, and hope to be sufficiently recovered to appear, if your Majesty's order remains in force till to-morrow.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Let me know to-morrow before 12 o'clock whether you may come to the conference, if not I will postpone it.

W.

BERLIN, *February 4, '65.*

## 82

*February 19, '65.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I submit, among the enclosures, some despatches which have arrived to-day, and beg most respectfully to ask if I may present myself to-morrow, to make my report, at a time to be most graciously fixed by your Majesty.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

I shall expect you to-day at 4 o'clock. What do your colleagues think of your views on the combination question?

W.

*February 19, '65.*

83

BABELSBERG, *June 16, '65.*

As I do not start till the 20th., Council and close \* not necessary before Monday, which might be more advantageous for the former, as it would not, as then,† take place immediately after my son's departure. As, however, the resolutions to be taken are not now made public, as they were then, and as I shall be in Berlin to-morrow in any case, I leave it to you to decide about Council and close. I shall be ready to hold the Council to-morrow at any time after 10.30 A. M. I should like to look through the closing speech beforehand. I am in Berlin to-day from 3 o'clock, at which time I receive Schleinitz, give a *diné* at 3.30, and then drive to the races, so that no time is left for you, unless you have anything to tell me quickly at the races.

WILHELM.

84

GASTEIN, *August 1, '65.*

MOST GRACIOUS KING AND MASTER,

Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to forgive me, if a perhaps too zealous concern for the interests of the sovereign service impels me to revert to the communications your Majesty has just been pleased to make to me. The idea of a partition or even of an administration of the Duchies would, if it became rumoured in the Augustenburg camp, arouse a violent storm in the diplomatic world and in press, as it would be construed as being the beginning of the

\* Of the Landtag

† 1863.

definite partition, and that the territories falling under exclusively Prussian administration would be lost to Augustenburg would be regarded as certain. I believe with your Majesty that H. M. the Queen will keep the intelligence secret; if, however, a hint from Coblenz, given as a matter of family confidence, should reach Queen Victoria, the Crown Prince's household, Weimar, or Baden, the fact alone that the secret, which at his request I pledged to Count Blome, was not kept on our side would awaken the Emperor Franz Josef's mistrust, and render the negotiations abortive. The inevitable result of this would be, too, war with Austria; your Majesty will, I venture to trust, ascribe it not only to my interest for your Majesty's service, but also to my attachment to your Majesty's person, that I am dominated by the impression that your Majesty would enter on a war with Austria with other feelings and in a freer spirit if the necessity thereto arises out of the nature of things and out of monarchical duties, than if the idea could be entertained that a premature disclosure of the proposed settlement had prevented the Emperor from lending his aid to the final resource acceptable to your Majesty. My anxiety is perhaps foolish, and even if there were grounds for it and your Majesty disregarded them, I would still think that God directs your Majesty's heart, and would not therefore do my service less gladly; but to relieve my conscience I submit to your Majesty the advisability of commanding me to recall the Feldjäger \* from Salzburg by telegraph.<sup>1</sup> The Ministerial expedition could be advanced as the outward motive for this step, to-morrow another Feldjäger could be in his place, or the same could return in due course. I respectfully enclose a copy of what I have telegraphed to Werther about the discussion with Count Blome. The knowledge of your Majesty's constant kindness permits me to venture to trust

\* The Feldjäger are a select corps of officers employed as King's special messengers. (Translator's note.)

that if my scruples do not meet with approbation your Majesty will pardon my urging them, as they proceed from an earnest endeavour to serve your Majesty, not only in conformity with my duty, but also to your Majesty's personal satisfaction.

In deepest veneration,

your Majesty's most faithful servant till death.

V. BISMARCK.

Written on the margin in the King's hand:

<sup>1</sup> I agree. My reason for mentioning the matter was that it had not been referred to during the past twenty-four hours. My communication to the Queen was made with the object of paving the way for a possible future seizure, which would gradually have developed out of the division of the Administration. However, I can represent it as such later, if a division of property really takes place, which I still do not anticipate, as Austria must remain so far behind now that she has gone so very far *for* Augustenburg and *against* occupation, it is true a *one-sided* occupation. W.

August 1, '65.

Added by the King, in pencil:

It would be safer to order the courier to bring back *all* the letters, including the one addressed to the Queen, as I directed him to deliver it immediately at the Potsdam station in Berlin, and, thinking it is urgent, he may send it off *alone* by post from Salzburg.

To-day sees the accomplishment of an act, the taking possession of the Duchy of Lauenburg, which is the result of my government, prosecuted by you with such great and signal circumspection and discernment. In the four years



that have elapsed since I summoned you to the head of the State Government, Prussia has gained a position which is worthy of her history, and which promises a fortunate and glorious future. In order to give public manifestation of the thanks which I have so frequently had the opportunity of expressing to you for your conspicuous merits, I herewith raise you and your descendants to the rank of Count, a distinction which will always be a proof of the high esteem I placed on your services to the Fatherland.

Your affectionate King

WILHELM.

To

My Minister-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
von Bismarck-Schönhausen.

BERLIN.

86

BERLIN, *November 14, '65.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour to return, as commanded, your Majesty's letter to his Royal Highness the Grand-Duke.\*<sup>1</sup> While expressing my most respectful thanks for the gracious communication of the same, I add the request that your Majesty may be graciously pleased to permit me to communicate the letter of October 28th in confidence to my colleagues, so that they too may obtain from it encouragement and inspiration in their efforts to carry out your Majesty's policy in conformity with your Majesty's intentions.

The policy of 1820 and '32, which his Royal Highness blames in the answer, may not in many respects have kept within right bounds; it did not, however, bring about the Revolution of 1848; this was, in Paris, the necessary fruit of the policy of Louis Philippe, and owed its success in

\* Of Baden.

Berlin, not to a lack of concessions, but to the fact that the Prussia of that time might have derived brilliant advantages from the weakness of others, if its good and true army had been used with a firm hand.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Quite agree, please have copy made and then remit me the enclosure.

<sup>2</sup> Very true!

W.

*November 14, '65.*

## 87

*B., December 7, '65.*

The Queen also will receive the Mexican Minister tomorrow, although he has not yet been able to announce himself. I defer my reception, however, from 3 to 4 o'clock, and he can then go from me to the Queen. If you wish to make your report to me, I would expect you from 3 o'clock onwards, unless you would care to hear the rehearsal of the music, in the White Hall, at 2 o'clock (Theatre staircase entrance, gateway 4), for the dance with flambeaux, in which case you would come to me after the same

WILHELM.

## 88

*BERLIN, January 31, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour, as I am still prohibited from going out, most respectfully to forward the principal despatches which have arrived to-day, and beg in the same way most respectfully to submit an enquiry addressed to me confidentially by the French Ambassador.\* The latter contemplates again giving a *soirée* with theatricals, on Tuesday next, and asks me whether your Majesty and her Majesty the Queen would be graciously pleased to accept his

\* Count Benedetti.

most respectful invitation to the same. After the ball at Count Goltz's, and in view of the political situation, I would, in the interests of the service, be most respectfully thankful if your Majesty would consent. Should your Majesty be disposed to accept, the Ambassador would be very grateful if I could let him have a hint as to whether the fact that your Majesty will be present may be intimated by mentioning "Uniform" on the invitations, and whether he would first have to take a *démarche* through her Majesty the Queen's Mistress of the Robes. It would be desirable, on account of the preparations and the sending out of the invitations, if I could furnish the Ambassador soon with the confidential information I have promised him.

V. BISMARCK.

89

B., February 21, '66.

Do instruct somebody to send me brief notes, in writing, during to-morrow's sitting, of the chief points touched. If the subject *questionné* should be introduced to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, please inform me at once.

W.

90

BERLIN, April 2, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I send herewith, as commanded, the letter to Bernstorff, from which, and also from the enclosed telegrams, it is evident that the English Cabinet cannot have believed that we were not wishful for it to bring influence to bear on Austria.<sup>1</sup> The sentence in her Majesty the Queen's letter is only a pretext for withdrawing the English "good services," as it was probably originally intended to exert pressure only on Prussia, not on Austria. As regards the publication, an "English note" was referred to in Vienna

letters several days before Loftus communicated the letter to me.

The telegram from Schleinitz,\* which is again most respectfully enclosed, was handed to me only now, at 7 o'clock, and I most humbly propose that the Czar's wishes be complied with, and that Schleinitz be telegraphed to accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Perfectly clear.

<sup>2</sup> Has been done.

91

B., April 3, '66.

Abeken will have told you that immediately he had read me our note in reply to Karolyi's, I remarked that it was somewhat cool and blunt in comparison with Austria. He endeavoured to reassure me and I consented to approve the note. My ideas have, however, returned to me, and I now wish to read this very important document through once more, in order to soften down some expressions here and there. Please therefore send me the note again at once for this purpose.

I feel keenly the Bavarian change of front, which, if Wurtemberg should also follow, will mean 100,000 *more* men against us allied with Austria, that is to say, we must now have also the 7th army corps available against the south. This will mean that our *equal strength* in Bohemia, as calculated by Moltke, if the 7th *and* † 8th army corps are included, will be reduced by 60,000 men, which are all we have to oppose those 100,000 men in the south. Please communicate this immediately to Moltke and Roon. Your language to Hanover is quite correct,—but what will the answer be? It may cost us another 10,000 men! W.

\* Prussian Military Attaché at St. Petersburg.

† Twice underlined in the original.

BERLIN, *April 3, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I most humbly place in your Majesty's hands the draft of the note in reply to Austria, and at the same time entreat most respectfully that it may be softened down. I apprehend the worst influence on the further development of the political situation if Vienna and, as the note will undoubtedly be published, all the other courts obtain the impression that our love of peace is greater than that of Austria. Moreover, the Vienna note was presented here on Friday evening, and the answer, I have assured Count Karolyi in reply to his question, is to go to Vienna this evening. This will be impossible if your Majesty commands alterations in the copy which has just been made, and a longer delay will produce the impression that we here are at a loss to know what reply to make. Any irresolution on our part encourages Austria, and increases the chances of a situation arising from which we should emerge with honour only<sup>1</sup> through war. In my most humble opinion Bavaria has not yet veered round, but Pfordten has invited us to lay before the Bund our proposals for reform.

The Bavarian note which Abeken reported on to-day has also been addressed to Austria, and espouses no party. But even if Bavaria<sup>2</sup> should side with Austria, the hostile force, in view of the altered attitude of Russia and Italy, would still be relatively less than that which at the time of Olmütz was to be opposed to the less powerful Prussian army.<sup>3</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> ??<sup>2</sup> The 60,000 men are not equipped for us?<sup>3</sup> The situation was then simply desperate.

W.



Postscript by the King:

The few alterations I have made do not soften down the sense, though they do soften the tone, *car le ton fait la musique!* If the courier should not be able to start before to-morrow, twenty-four hours longer (?) cannot be dangerous to us; I leave the final sentence entirely to you.

W.

93

BERLIN, April 3, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY

has been graciously pleased, through Abeken, to command me to give my opinion as to whether the letter from the Duke of Coburg, which I beg most respectfully to return herewith, should be answered. I beg to remind your Majesty that the Duke of Coburg has been concerned in every intrigue during the past four years against your Majesty's home and foreign policy. His Highness has largely co-operated with money and influence to the election of democrats in Prussia, interests himself in the Associations for arming the people (Büchsen-Groschen-Vereinen), and has adopted such an attitude towards the monarchy, that your Majesty strongly remonstrated with the Duke in a long letter, and declined his visit on account of the bad impression it would have on the army. The Duke, with his officials Samwer and Francke, is the main support of the anti-Prussian Augustenburgerism, but for him the Hereditary Prince would have listened to reason. The Duke has brought about the recall of Lord Napier, as being too Prussian a diplomat. I beg most respectfully to hint at the Duke's influence on his Royal Highness the Crown Prince. I certainly do not go too far when I characterise his Highness as one of the most implacable antagonists of your Majesty's policy, and I expect from him no devotion for your Majesty's honour and advantage.

The present communication from the Duke, and Count Mensdorff's completely untrue letter, evidently written to order for the purpose of being communicated to your Majesty, reveal a connection with the intelligence which reached your Majesty from Queen Victoria through his Royal Highness the Crown Prince, and similar insinuations will no doubt have reached your Majesty also from other quarters. All this is unquestionably part of a well-laid plan, in pursuance of which the open and secret opponents of your Majesty's policy are using all their efforts to prevail on your Majesty to be more compliant towards Austria, and thus to pave the way for another policy; meanwhile your Majesty's present Ministry and I, in particular, will be represented as the cause of all the mischief. Your Majesty will, without my assurance of the same, certainly be convinced that even if my health had not been affected by the last few years, I would at any time willingly, and with feelings of life-long gratitude for the frequent evidences graciously accorded me of your Majesty's favour, retire from active life, also if my remaining in office would entail no disadvantages on your Majesty; how much the more so, therefore, when my resignation may benefit King and Fatherland. I see no possibility, however, of any other Minister recommending with honour to your Majesty another policy than that hitherto pursued, and sanctioned in the Council of February 28th, for this policy is independent of every party colour, is prompted only by Prussia's interests, and is rendered inevitable by the situation. When the Duke of Coburg recommends another policy than that corresponding with the Vienna prescriptions I respectfully point out that the same gentleman has for the last four years recommended everything that was opposed to monarchical and especially Prussian interests. Your Majesty nevertheless honoured the Duke by answering his letter received on the 22nd. Should your Majesty also answer this present letter, with its insult-

ing and untruthful enclosure, your Majesty would encourage your adversaries and dishearten your servants.

My most humble proposal therefore is that your Majesty may be graciously pleased to leave the Duke's letter unanswered and not conceal from the Adjutant the fact that the forwarding of the enclosure has not had a pleasing effect on your Majesty. If the personality lent itself to the purpose it might perhaps be well to intimate by word of mouth that your Majesty sees clearly through the design of the entire manœuvre with Mensdorff's letter, and objects to the tone of the latter.

V. BISMARCK.

94

Notes for Lieut. von Schleinitz, of the 7th Cuirassier Regiment, as a verbal answer to the Duke of Coburg.

In July of last year I had my hand on my sword-hilt against Austria.

Gastein received peace.

Since then matters have become worse than ever.

There is discord in the air. Austria is arming, and sending troops to its northern frontier against Prussia.

I wait a fortnight before taking counter measures, because Austria disclaims her armaments, calls them dislocation measures, and, as the army is not placed on a war footing, represents them as not hostile.

I cannot suffer this mask, and must seek to tear it off.

The reply to Carolyi's note will explain all this more clearly.

April 4, '66.

95

B., April 8,\* '66.

Nos. 78 and 79 of the *Kreuz Zeitung* have just been laid before me by a stranger (as I have not taken in this paper since 1861; coronation article in June) on account of the abusive article on the Duke of Coburg. This is very

\* Actually April 7th.

unpleasant for me, as only you, and the Queen and Crown Prince knew of the Duke's letter to me, so that the source of the article is at once guessed. You always told me that the Government has no influence on the *Kreuz Zeitung*, but it seems to me that this is a case which proves the contrary. The manner in which I answered the Duke and did not answer the second time showed him clearly that I desired no continuance of the correspondence. Such articles as the one in question, however, must make him more inimically disposed towards us, and that is not politically correct at this moment. Please, therefore, put a stop to the mischievous procedure of the *Kreuz Zeitung* in respect of the Duke.  
W.

96

BERLIN, April 7, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most humbly for pardon if I have incurred your Majesty's displeasure through the article on the interposition of the Duke of Coburg, which does not refer to the latter's letter but follows on a series of other newspaper articles on this interposition. I would never dare to deceive your Majesty, and openly confess that I myself suggested the substance of this article, as I, like every one of my colleagues, have not influence enough on the *Kreuz Zeitung* to dictate what it shall not print, but yet so much that it accepts what is not directly contrary to its policy; the same relations exist with the *Spener Zeitung*, the *National Zeitung*, and many others, and I do not believe I have ever disclaimed this kind of influence.

It appeared to me that your Majesty yourself was indignant at the insincerity in the procedure of the Duke and of Count Mensdorff; your Majesty, however, generously pardoned the lack of veneration revealed by such procedure, as was the case with the previous malevolence of the Duke, who, by favouring the democrats, and by disturbing the re-

lations with England, has worked more harm to your Majesty and the Prussian State than he can ever repair by a military convention, and who showed his true sentiments towards your Majesty at the time of the assembly of the Princes at Frankfurt. Your Majesty will have no doubt of my devotion and of my obedience; your Majesty will not, however, expect me to be more than human, and always to remain cool when I see how the difficult, and, I may perhaps say, wearing service which devolves on me is intentionally rendered more onerous by the disfavour of such high-placed personalities who, according to human expectation, ought before all others to have at heart the success of Prussian politics and the fame of your Majesty and of the Royal House. And why am I the object of this irreconcilable disfavour, why this fight against powerful influences which I have to sustain at every step of the laborious path? Merely because I find it impossible to serve two masters, to pursue another policy than your Majesty's, and to be susceptible to other influences than your Majesty's commands. My offence is that I was ready to serve your Majesty in compliance with your Majesty's will when others declined to do so, that I did not hesitate to obey your Majesty at the risk of incurring the disfavour of those who are nearest to your Majesty. I could obtain peace if, like so many of my predecessors, I consented to report to your Majesty as my own conviction what is suggested to me from other quarters, and especially if I would advise compliance in home politics and in the military organisation; for in foreign politics nothing happens but what was formerly desired by those who bear ill-will towards me.

Will your Majesty pardon me if, in these struggles, the feeling of being unjustly assailed, merely because I endeavour to fulfil my duty towards your Majesty without looking to one side or the other, robs me of the calm which I myself should so much like to preserve.



I most respectfully enclose some newspaper cuttings which show that the interposition of the Duke has for a long time been the subject of discussion in the press, and that it was first mentioned in Vienna.

V. BISMARCK.

97

B., *April 11, '66.*

It seems to me that the views expressed in the enclosure are the right ones. If you see anything to object to, let me know by 7 o'clock, as I have ordered Mühler to come to me at that time.

The popular agitations against the war are assuming very unpleasant dimensions!

W.

98

BERLIN, *April 15, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY

will, I venture to trust, most graciously permit me to use my returning ability to write in laying at your Majesty's feet my most respectful thanks for the endowment of the Lauenburg estate. Apart from the adjustment of the difference in the claims and revenues of my position, I see in the gracious resolution, spontaneously taken by your Majesty, a fresh proof of the gracious feelings I have so often had opportunity of learning that your Majesty entertains towards me, and which I regard as that reward for faithful service which I am most eager to obtain.

I beg most respectfully to enclose some documents which have been received this afternoon.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Receive my best thanks for these thanks. If you were only quite well again. But above all, care.

W.

B., *April 16, '66.*

B., April 20, '66.

You were to telegraph to Werther that we consented to disarmament, but would write concerning details.

W.

BERLIN, April 22, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I most respectfully submit the enclosed letter received to-day from Manteuffel. I can only most humbly concur in the train of thought and the conclusions arrived at in it, especially that we should sell no horses. Your Majesty will, I venture to trust, retain the conviction that it is contrary to my feelings, I may say my faith, to desire to influence in an officious manner the highest sovereign determinations on war and peace; that is a domain in which I confidently leave to God alone the direction of your Majesty's heart for the welfare of the Fatherland, and would rather pray than advise. At the same time I dare not disguise the conviction that if peace is maintained *now* we shall be threatened with the danger of war later, perhaps in a few months' time, under *more unfavourable conditions*. Lasting peace is maintained only when *both* parties desire it; Austria may, for private reasons, desire that it is not disturbed *now*. But anyone who, like your Majesty's most humble servant, has for sixteen years been most intimately concerned with Austrian policy, cannot doubt that hostility towards Prussia has become the chief, one might say the only political aim in Vienna. It will be actively prosecuted as soon as the Vienna Cabinet considers the circumstances more favourable than at present. Austria's next endeavour will be to render them more favourable in Italy and France. Perhaps, however, hatred, the eager desire for combat, and pecuniary

embarrassment are already too great to permit of our yesterday's reply being considered. Your Majesty has, in any case, the satisfaction of having done everything compatible with honour that could be done for peace.

V. BISMARCK.

101

B., April 23, '66.

I begin these lines with the last of your letter: your Majesty has, in any case, the satisfaction of having done everything compatible with honour that could be done for peace.

That has been my guiding star in the present crisis.

In his nervous letter, Manteuffel overlooks the fact that in 1851 the whole army was mobilised, war was, therefore, almost declared, whereas we have now intentionally exhibited a *minime* preparedness for war of a defensive nature, owing to similar provocation. In 1851 the Prussian demands were allowed to drop. Who has told Manteuffel that we will now let the present ones drop? In the Council held on February 28th, you yourself defined the policy as being that war should not be allowed to break out on account of the Duchies *alone*, so that the higher prize, the German question, must be brought in. This has been done, although Manteuffel will not comprehend it. This question therefore remains in the foreground, as was decided on February 28th. Nothing is changed, and no one can with justice maintain that with the 40,000 more men whom we have raised we have negotiated under arms. If we do not now sell the horses, but distribute them otherwise, even Manteuffel will be satisfied.

I conclude, from previous South German communications, that the programme was brought forward in Augsburg yesterday to give the first place to the question of the Duchies. It occurs to me whether we should not in this case forestall other proposals, and ourselves be the first

to demand the annexation officially?? That will, of course, raise a storm; the appeal to the people will be at once placed in the foreground in order to fight against us, for we shall not have a majority of votes now. Then the moment for mobilisation will have arrived, which may also be brought about by the discussion in Parliament.???\*

Of course we must demand annexation, against the Lauenburg money precedent.†

If, on the other hand, the demand be made in Augsburg for Parliament to be summoned *only* after our plans of reform are already known, the matter will stand differently, but *not* more favourably for us, for we can hardly oppose such a demand—as, indeed, that is not your plan—with cogent reasons?

You may send these lines to Manteuffel, and tell him that if a *Prussian now* whispers Olmütz in my ears I will *at once* lay down the Government! Others, i. e. my enemies will cry Olmütz; shall a Prussian join in the cry? W.

Mtfl. (Manteuffel's) letter to me contains nothing political. s. p. r.

102

BERLIN, May 1, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I submit the enclosure in support of my urgent and most respectful entreaty that your Majesty will not longer leave the country in the danger to which, in my most humble conviction, it is at present exposed in view of the superior Austrian armaments which, notwithstanding all assurances of peace, daily assume larger dimensions. The

\* The three notes of interrogation are evidently added by the writer later, probably on reading over the letter a second time.

† i. e. Against a money payment to Austria, as was agreed upon in the Gastein treaty for the relinquishment of the Austrian share in Lauenburg.

Minister for War will submit to your Majesty to-morrow a report of the Ministry of State and proposals for further precautionary measures, and if your Majesty will not refuse me the testimony that I am not easily accessible to *unfounded* apprehensions, I venture to hope that your Majesty will graciously take into consideration my entreaty to accelerate measures to be adopted, as being the result of a *justified* apprehension.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Without waiting till our note, which is to be presented to-day, is received? That seems to cast all the *torts* again on us, whereas for the moment our attitude is appreciated. I will, of course, hear what Roon has to say.

And the Paris and St. Petersburg communications which are announced for to-day?

W.

May 2, '66.

103

BERLIN, May 2, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to submit the telegraphic communication which has just been received from Vienna. It affords no prospect that Austria will disarm, though it does that Austria will put us off for a few days in order to complete her armaments before she adopts another tone to your Majesty, relying on having secured an advantage over us which we cannot recover.

I am informed from the Bourse to-day that financial measures of a pernicious nature (forced loans?) are contemplated in Vienna, and that the merchants here, including the Elders, find the inactivity of the Royal Government, in view of Austria's surpassing armaments, incomprehensible, and in the highest degree disquieting and dangerous for the country. This feeling, which does not dominate your Majesty's Ministers for the first time to-day, has become



general in the town now that the facts which were previously known to the Government have penetrated to the public. The outbursts among the public will, should it transpire—which God forbid—that the protection of the country has actually been neglected, undoubtedly be very animated.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

General Mutius reports that it is certain that 12,000 men are stationed between Troppau and Jägerndorff, that is, immediately on the frontier. This, taken with Werther's telegram, proves that the final moment has come for us to order great armaments, which, therefore, is to be deliberated on at 3 o'clock. Have you informed my son? He is here to put the troops through their manœuvres. W.

*May 3, '66, 12.30 o'clock in the night.*

#### 104

Memorandum for the King in Bismarck's handwriting.

*May 2, '66.*

At the present moment the following is on hand:

1. What appears to be an unauthenticated offer from Vienna to conclude a treaty in accordance with which his Majesty is to be empowered, provided the Duchies are not merged with the Prussian Crown, to transfer the sovereignty over the former to a Prussian or other Prince, in such a manner that the Prussian Crown remains in direct possession of the harbour of Kiel, probably also of the Düppel fortifications and of other advantages officially offered by Austria, that 25 million Thalers are to be paid by the Duchies to Austria as "war expenses," and that an endeavour is to be made so to reform the Bund that the North German contingent should attach itself to Prussia, the South German including the Hohenzollern contingent and the Rastatt garrison to remain exclusively at the disposal of Austria.

2. A telegram from Florence, according to which King Victor Emanuel considers war inevitable, and, whatever may be the origin of the hostilities, relies on Prussia and Italy beginning war on the same day.

3. A despatch from Count Goltz, according to which the Emperor Napoleon considers the time has now arrived for the understanding with Prussia, and in case this should not be realised he thinks he cannot refuse the offers made to him by Austria.

The nature of the latter is not manifest, and as regards the basis of an understanding with us the Emperor confines himself, according to this report, to the intimation that the eyes of France are directed to the Rhine.

4. Did the French Ambassador yesterday put to us the confidential question, *dans quelle disposition une ouverture tendant à réunir un congrès trouverait la Cour de Prusse?*

5. A letter from Czar Alexander, which has already been advised, is expected to reach here to-morrow.

6. Information continues to arrive up to the present moment of the constantly increasing numbers of Austrian troops immediately on the Prussian frontier fully prepared for war, and of the fears that they will at once invade Prussia.

In these circumstances it must be indispensable immediately to take the strongest military measures against the present danger designated under No. 6. This measure should be quite independent of the diplomatic negotiations resulting from the other points. It prejudices none of our political decisions, on the contrary it gives to each of these the indispensable foundation of present security at home.

The proposals of France seem, in so far as they can be judged from the insufficient material to hand, in principle inadmissible, and if they are confirmed would refer us to negotiations with Austria. It is not, however, recommendable to give France an unqualified answer immediately in the

negative, but, perhaps by sending a special mission with a Royal confidential letter couched in general terms, to obtain more precise views as to Napoleon's intentions and at the same time thereby also to gain time. The Congress idea might, as your Majesty has already commanded, be followed up in this sense.

Italy, in view of her previous attitude, should be strongly disadvised against taking any warlike initiative, and be informed that the negotiations conducted by Austria in Paris recommend the utmost precaution. We ourselves, cannot, seeing that Goltz has promised secrecy, and also in the interest of our policy, publish the fact that we anticipate proposals on the part of France which are unpleasant to us.

At the same time, it might be well, through the same confidential means by which the initiative has reached us, to enter into the negotiations with Austria suggested therein, although with the precaution that in case the proposition should not be made with honourable intentions we should not, by betraying our readiness, place Austria in a position to further her own understanding with France and to turn Italy from us. That Austria will, if requested, drop the stipulation of the irreconcilability of the Prussian Crown with the direct possession of the Duchies, is characterised as probable, under quotation of an alleged utterance of the Emperor's that he still regards the present Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs as inspiring him with more confidence than any other in respect of an understanding with Austria.

With reference to these negotiations, it will be particularly important to learn from the expected letter from Czar Alexander further details as to Russia's attitude towards the present situation and to the consequences which may develop from it.

The question of the authenticity of the Austrian overtures will be determinative and it will be a difficult task, should she arrive at an understanding with us, to prevail on

Austria to adopt such an attitude towards Italy as it would be our duty in honour towards Italy to demand.

105

BERLIN, May 5, '66.

The whole matter is contained in the postscript: \*

War with France and Austria if we do not give up the Rhine!

That is the secret core of the whole affair!

The situation thus becomes very difficult, and Goltz's letter contains much that is worth going into.

How have you instructed Savigny for to-day?

Reply by letter. I must come to you to-day at 2.30, as we start at 3.30 for the *diné* at Charlottenburg.

There are very good proposals in the enclosure from Wolff, it seems to me, too, that he has already received from you such intelligence as is to be published quickly. More by word of mouth. W.

106

B., May 16, '66.

Enclosed are three letters from:

Czar Alexander,

The Grand-Duke of Weimar,

The Duke of Coburg,

which we must discuss verbally.

The first is as important as it is interesting, though the three chief points of the same are *en train*. It is sad that the telegram I am returning rejects the bases for the Congress.

Colonel Bünting is the bearer of the Emperor's letter.

Has Gablenz † been in Weimar already? The Grand-

\* Evidently the postscript to the despatch from Count Goltz referred to in No. 104.

† Baron Anton von Gablenz, who at that time was making proposals in Berlin and Vienna for a peaceable settlement of the Prussian-Austrian conflict.

Duke's letter almost leads one to suppose that he has. But it is drawn up as if I am to make the proposals which are to appear to come from him? W.

107

B., May 16, '66.

Bodelschwingh will not desert his colours, he is sensible of the effect his retirement would produce!

Now, however, I request of his colleagues that they will continue to place confidence in him, and will forget yesterday's incident, as the times are too grave \* for us to be at variance. This you will please tell the Ministers in my name. WILHELM.

Let me know when you wish to come and make your report.

(Enclosures.)

I.

Minister von Bodelschwingh to Bismarck.

BERLIN, May 14, '66.

DEAREST FRIEND,

The matter is so urgent that I will not keep back for the other documents the decision I arrived at to-day as the result of yesterday's deliberation of the Ministry of State on the issue of exchequer bills. Kindly permit me, however, to disburden my heart in the following lines.

You could not deny me the testimony that it has always been my endeavour to keep our finances intact, and at least not to impair their old, good reputation. And now I find myself confronted with demands from the Minister for War which I know no *sure* way of meeting—after I have offered no firm opposition to the retarded summoning of the Landtag and the dissolution of the same, but have finally coin-

\* Twice underlined in the original.



cided with the view of *all* my colleagues, for which I reproach myself bitterly. It is true I knew at the time of that debate only of moderate warlike preparations, and did not in the slightest anticipate that they would gradually develop into the mobilisation of the whole army. I, cannot alter the situation, however, and I have too slight a grasp of it in many points to form a definite opinion as to its further development. You know well enough that I have always wished for a peaceable settlement, and have expressed myself in that sense.

As Roon recently characterised the mobilisation of the whole army as a possible means of maintaining peace, and as you informed us in general terms yesterday, in reply to questions, that negotiations were still pending with Austria, I may and can not relinquish the hope that with the help of God your circumspect efforts may result in preserving us from the incalculable horrors of war.

The Almighty God, whose hand recently \* protected you so wondrously, thereby, I think, clearly manifested that He intends you to work for peace,—and I have no fear of being misunderstood when I entreat you, from the bottom of my heart, so to conduct and hasten the negotiations with Austria, that they will soon arrive at a conclusion honourable to both sides. If, dearest friend, you are animated with thoughts of peace and wishes for peace, I have firm trust that God will succour you and give you wisdom, and also that our dear, loved King will certainly most joyfully and most efficiently strengthen you in the work of peace, for which Germany and the Fatherland will laud the King and you.

I cannot get rid of the conviction, which oppresses me, and most grievously torments me, that the war once enkindled can and will, even if it ends favourably, yield no benefit in

\* Refers to the attempt on Bismarck's life, made by Cohen-Blind on May 7, 1866.

any way proportionate to the sacrifices of men and well-being, and the derangement of our finances it will entail, and which in all probability will compel us to make concessions to France which threaten to tear in pieces the glorious pages of our history on which the wars for freedom and the successes attained in them are inscribed.

And then the *possibility* of an unsuccessful war? I shudder when I recall to my mind the events of my earliest youth!

The crises caused already by the mobilisation are appallingly great. From all sides come appeals for help—and we are deprived of the possibility of granting it; and how will the appeals and our impossibility to render help increase if—what God in His mercy forbid—war really breaks out.

Impute to Austria, I entreat and implore you most earnestly, with her equal rights to Schleswig-Holstein, only what is fair, and not offensive to her honour,—and endeavour to secure us an honourable peace,—and *then* solve the German question in such a manner that both Prussia and Austria will gain internal power and strength. I have such great trust in your circumspection and energy that I am confident God will in His mercy bless your work of peace.

You must and will not misunderstand me when I disburden my overcharged heart with these candid words; I know to whom they are addressed, and feel assured of their friendly reception. If you scold me for not having expressed myself thus in our previous deliberations, I willingly submit to this reproach, and venture only to put forward as my excuse that I was afraid I should not be able to express myself in quite the right manner, and with the necessary calm, and might thus have been provocative.

In sincere friendship,

Your

V. BODELSCHWINGH.

## II.

Minister von Bodelschwingh to Bismarck.

BERLIN, May 16, '66.

DEAREST FRIEND,

I have just returned from the King, who has vanquished me and *compelled* me to remain in office, not by commanding it, but in his kind and irresistible manner. I hope you and our other colleagues will approve of this decision, and will pray with me that God will bless it and our future joint labours for King and Fatherland at this grave and difficult time!

Wollny told me yesterday evening that he was to be with you at 1 o'clock to-day, with the work in question. This induces me to ask if I shall come to you then, or perhaps a little before that time? I want to speak to you also about the Dresden Tariff Conference.

Your

BODELSCHWINGH.

108

B., May 21, '66.

The enclosed \* has been sent to me by the Queen. It is indeed only an improvement on similar previous ones, but the *modus* is somewhat unusual, as higher regions wish to concern themselves with murder. As the accomplishment is, it appears, postponed till the war, there seems to be no hurry, but nevertheless please let me know what the police can do to keep the matter in view—if only to set the Queen at ease.

I leave at 12 for Potsdam, and do not return till 8 o'clock.

W.

\* Announcement of an outrage.

109

BERLIN, *May 29, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I most respectfully report that Minister von Bodelschwingh has repeatedly expressed to me his intention of retiring, as his nervous system occasions him so much suffering, and I believe that it will be neither possible nor advantageous to induce him to remain.<sup>1</sup>

If it is your Majesty's will to see General Govone after the military report to-morrow, I beg your Majesty most humbly to let him (perhaps for 4 o'clock) be informed.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> I sent him yesterday my request concerning the financial situation, and will wait, therefore, to see what he does.

<sup>2</sup> As I am going to Nostitz's \* funeral at 3 o'clock, then inspect a battalion on the railway, then probably see you, will you invite Govone to *diné* with me at 5 o'clock. W.

*May 30, '66.*

110

BERLIN, *June 3, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour, in case your Majesty should not return to-night, to submit the enclosed telegram from Röder,\* which certainly shows the extreme importance of the views developed in Manteuffel's letter. I beg to be favoured with your Majesty's commands on the subject, after the Council to-morrow. The despatch for Vienna, in which note is taken of the tearing up of the Gastein treaty by Austria, (your Majesty reserving further decisions) can still leave this evening, if your Majesty orders it by telegraph.

V. BISMARCK.

\* Count August Ferd. Ludwig von Nostitz, an eminent cavalry general, who died on May 28, 1866.

Marginal notes by the King:

Manteuffel's disposition cannot take effect until he has received instructions from here? as the despatch which leaves here to-day, the taking note of the Frankfurt declaration, must first be known in Vienna? It is not possible to stop the Austrians from moving forwards, or to prevent the concentration of the Kalik brigade *before* the declaration of war? Could you come to me a little before 12 o'clock to-morrow, to submit your draft for the Conference?

W.

June 3, '66.

### III

BERLIN, June 6, '66.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour most humbly to present two more telegrams, and two requests for audiences. The one concerns the Italian Colonel Count Avet, who has been sent here as Military Attaché in the same position as Loucadou.<sup>1</sup> The other concerns Baron Scheel-Plessen, whom I have requested to return to Holstein to-morrow evening, so that Manteuffel may have the support of a friendly adviser who is acquainted with the local conditions. He tells me, however, that he has announced himself through Pückler, and is now awaiting your Majesty's commands. Would your Majesty perhaps be gracious enough to see him to-morrow, or to let him know that in these circumstances he need not wait.<sup>2</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal notes by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Friday at 1 o'clock.

<sup>2</sup> You must first write me what you have arranged with him with respect to the possible prevention of the assembling of the Itzehoe deputies? Shall we prevent it altogether, or follow it up step by step, from place to place,



or content ourselves merely with a protest? Perhaps I could see him before you, about 5 o'clock, or not at all.

W.

*June 7, '66.*

112

B., *June 10, '66, Midnight.*

I have just been startled by Wolff's telegram with the news that the Emperor Franz Josef has left to join the army at Olmütz. Should this be confirmed, or should there be other important reports to be made, I have had notice sent to you to come to Potsdam by the 2 o'clock train; if great despatch is necessary, I expect you by the 12 o'clock train, but please let me know by telegraph what time you choose. *En cas de besoin*, bring Roon and the Military Cabinet with you, if you can inform them

W.

113

Enclosed is Coburg's answer to my question, which Roon or Treskow told me you wished me to put to the monarchs of Coburg, Altenburg and Waldeck, whether, now that the Bund is dispersed, I could freely dispose of their contingents, as I certainly supposed I could do.

W.

*June 15, '66.*

114

B., *June 16, '66.*

So the die is cast! God alone knows what will be the result of this beginning!

Either we conquer or we will bear with honour what Heaven decrees for Prussia!!

Your

WILHELM.

## 115

B., June 17, '66.

How shall we provide for the Government in Hanover now that, as it seems, the King has fled? Despatch is very necessary.

W.

## 116

B., June 17, '66.

When you proposed to send Duncker\* to Herwarth (or Falkenstein?), I understood you that my son had stated that he could not use him in his present position. The truth now comes to light, he wishes to have Friedberg, Privy Councillor of Justice, in his place! on account of his position as military Governor in Silesia. Duncker would have done much better for that, as he has had a wider training, at least I think so?

Please send me your view *before* 2 o'clock, as I start at that time for Potsdam to a *diné*; I shall be back at 8 o'clock.

As the Austrian manifesto was published *avant la lettre* ours must, if possible, be presented to-day, but precautions are to be taken that it too does not appear *avant la lettre*.

I shall copy the Ducal letters immediately; they will do no good.

W.

## 117

BERLIN, June 17, '66.

Friedberg is a pure lawyer, and over and above more theoretical than not as a Ministerial Councillor, he is, therefore, not exactly suited for the post in Silesia, which at the present moment is an eminently practical one; what is required there is an administrative official. Your Majesty will also be aware of the fact that Friedberg is much more

\* Max Duncker, who had occupied an important political position near the person of the Crown Prince since 1861, lost his Highness's confidence at this time for determinedly espousing Bismarck's German policy, and sent in his resignation on June 12.

strongly opposed to the home policy and, until within the last few days, also to the foreign policy of your Majesty's Government, than was ever the case with Duncker.

My most respectful proposal would be that your Majesty urge the scruples mentioned at the commencement of this letter, and resolve to come to no decision before having inquired of the Minister of Justice concerning Friedberg. Duncker has lost all credit with his Royal Highness.

V. BISMARCK.

## 118

B., June 25, '66.

General Falkenstein's action in sending back the Adjutant of the King of Hanover with a letter for me, probably containing conditions of capitulation, is quite inadmissible. I must know the contents of the letter before 10 o'clock to-morrow morning, for which reason I must send the enclosed telegram to the Duke of Coburg, to give the King the opportunity of letting us know by telegraph from Gotha the contents of the letter, which, by an inadvertence, was sent back. Otherwise I cannot take the responsibility of ordering the attack, as I have not received the *answer* which was sent off. The sending of the Adjutant to Eisenach, instead of to Gotha, certainly looks as if it was intended to delay on account of Vacha.\* W.

(Enclosure.)

Telegram from his Majesty the King of Prussia to the Duke of Coburg,  
at Gotha

By an inadvertence the Adjutant of the King of Hanover, with the latter's letter to me concerning capitulation, has not been received, as he went to Eisenach instead of to Gotha. Send at once an officer to the King telling him this,

\**i. e.* On account of the advance of the Bavarians to Vacha.

and that I beg him to send me immediately, by telegraph from Gotha, the chief points of his letter, but so speedily that I may decide before 10 o'clock in the morning of the 26th, at which time the period of 24 hours \* allowed for consideration expires.

WILHELM.

To be despatched with all speed.

Added in Bismarck's handwriting:

*cessat*, in accordance with verbal orders from his Maj.

June 26, 1.30 A. M.

B.

# 119

B., August 8, '66.

What attitude shall be taken towards the election of the President of the House of Deputies? von Vincke Olbendorff told me that Grabow would retire if he knew that I do not wish to have him, which I thereupon stated very energetically. The election would then be between the one-armed Arnim and Count Schwerin. The gentlemen of the Upper House told me yesterday that they do not believe Arnim will get through. Can we accept Schwerin? I tacitly forbade him the Court last winter, by not sending him invitations. Would it be politic nevertheless to accept him, as he is at least not quite extreme?

W.

# 120

B., August 11, '66.

Have you spoken to Roggenbach? † He starts from the idea that Baden's geographical position is unfavourable, says that to improve it Baden must extend to the Prussian frontier, and suggests, therefore, an exchange of the north-

\* Granted by Lieut. General von Alversdelen to the Hanoverians.

† From 1861 to 1865 Minister for Foreign Affairs in Baden.

east corner of Baden with Bavaria for the Rhenish Palatinate. I replied that this might become a very difficult question, as we might like to compensate Darmstadt with Rhenish Bavaria for Upper Hesse. Abeken told me that von der Pfordten will sacrifice Culmbach? and wished to conclude a Military Alliance? à la Wurtemberg. Such an alliance with Darmstadt would *not* make me less reluctant to give up Upper Hesse.

W.

121

BERLIN, *August 16, '66.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have the honour to place at your Majesty's feet the most respectful expression of my sympathy in your Majesty's indisposition, and to beg for the most gracious execution of the enclosed Royal message.\* It would be read tomorrow, the 17th, in accordance with your Majesty's commands, and in both Houses of the Landtag, the Presidents of which I have requested to appoint sittings for this purpose.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Thank you very much. What have you decided about Mayence?

W.

122

B., *August 18, '66.*

Shall we leave Meisenheim to Homburg, or give it to Oldenburg-Birkenfeld? Could Bavaria be forced, on Russia's account, by handing over Aschaffenburg to Hesse-Darmstadt?

How do the negotiations with Bavaria stand? Savigny wanted to report to me on his apparently dissenting view

\* Respecting the union of the Kingdom of Hanover, the Electorate of Hesse, the Duchy of Nassau, and the free city of Frankfurt-on-the-Main with Prussia.



with regard to Culmbach, but I was too exhausted for a discussion, and appointed him to come to-morrow, which, however, will probably be too late, as the armistice with Bavaria expires on the 22nd. How far are we with von der Pfordten? My son told me that he had mentioned to you, at Nicolsburg, the Duke of Coburg's wish for a piece of Bavaria, I, however, have heard nothing of it either from you or from my son till the day before yesterday. I was also very much surprised to learn through Savigny yesterday of the final settlement with Baden, whereas I knew nothing whatever of the progress of the negotiations. I wish, therefore, now to be informed daily of the negotiations with Bavaria and Darmstadt.

W.

## 123

BERLIN, *September 8, '66.*

The two articles enclosed contain, it is true, only what is our intention, but now that the 2nd. Chamber has declared for the annexation, it will be absolutely necessary for the proposed Commission under Delbrück to meet, and to call together the notable persons of the new countries. I wish to hold a sitting of the Council, in order to discuss the principles on which we are to act on the transference of the annexed countries into the new conditions, etc. With so many separate lands, possessing so many peculiarities, which must at first be respected, exclusive of the military constitution, the task is a difficult one, and above all the question of persons is very important.

W.

## 124

BERLIN, *September 20, '66.*

To-day's ceremony of the entry of my victorious troops reminds me especially of the great services you have rendered in this memorable time. You have not only inscribed

your name as a statesman for all time on the tablets of honour of our history, but you have also rendered me faithful service as a soldier, and in connection with to-day's military ceremonial I will be specially mindful of the fact that you have shown me on all occasions the heart and the spirit of a soldier. I desire that you shall belong permanently to my army, and herewith promote you to be Major-General, and at the same time—so that you need not remove the colours you wore at Königgrätz—appoint you chief of the 7th. heavy Landwehr cavalry regiment.

WILHELM.

## 125

B., September 21, '66.

As the late King commanded that the classes of the Hohenzollern Order, *first* bestowed in September 185?, should not be laid aside on the bestowal of a *higher* class, and as this case applies to you, I am sending you, to add to the Knight's Cross, which can now never be laid aside, the swords and the black and white ribbon, in remembrance of the *historical shells*,\* as I announced to you verbally yesterday.

Your

WILHELM

Don't expose yourself to the damp weather to-day!

## 126

December 1, '66.

I am exceedingly glad at your safe return,† recommend moderation, however, with the work at first, and shall expect you to-morrow at 1 o'clock.

WILHELM.

\* At Königgrätz, *vide* Bismarck's letter of July 9, 1866 to his wife.

† From Putbus, where he had been a long time ill.

127

BERLIN, *February 12, '67.*

When looking back to the decisive turning point reached by the destinies of Prussia through the glorious fights of the past year, the most distant generations will never forget that the elevation of the Fatherland to new power, and to imperishable honours, that the opening up of an epoch of a rich and, with God's help, a blessing-bringing development are essentially due to your penetration, your energy, and the skilful manner in which you conducted the affairs entrusted to you.

I have decided to show a renewed appreciation of these your most distinguished merits, by the bestowal of a gift of four hundred thousand Thalers.\* The Minister for Finance has been directed to place this sum at your disposal.

It would be in accordance with my wishes if you devoted this gift, the bestowal of which is to manifest my and the Fatherland's thanks, to the purchase of landed property, and entailed the same, so that with the glory of your name it also may remain permanently in your family.

Your grateful and faithfully devoted

King,

WILHELM.

128

BERLIN, *March 14, '67.**1 o'clock P. M.*

The Duke of Ujest has this moment come to me to announce that both he and Count Eberhard Stolberg have heard beyond a doubt that, in consequence of the remarks which passed between you and the former Hanoverian Minister von Münchhausen in the sitting of the Reichstag on the 11th. inst., you have challenged him. Should this be

\* About £60,000.

the case, I hereby forbid you most explicitly to take any step in the matter before you have communicated to me yourself, or through a third person, further details of the whole affair.

WILHELM.

126

April 1, '67.

The latest number of the Dutch official journal, the *Staats-Courant* (communicated confidentially by Count Bylandt \*), contains in the non-unofficial section the following Communiqué:

Au nom de la chancellerie Luxembourgeoise, nous sommes priés de démentir le plus formellement la nouvelle, qu'une cession du Grand-Duché aurait eu lieu et de faire remarquer qu'il ne saurait être question d'une cession pareille qu'aprèsque aussi les Grandes-Puissances intéressées dans la question se soient entendues à cet égard.

Marginal note by the King:

From this it must be assumed that we have been the means of putting the question on to the right track, and of preventing any precipitancy. What will *he* say? I congratulate you on to-day's *exposé*, and on your birthday, the device for which is: care, care, and again care!

Your

W.

130

BERLIN, April 5, '67.

The enclosed is addressed to me *officially* by Prince Henry †, *par l'entremise* of his sister, the Grand-Duchess of Weimar. *La fin mot* is that Luxemburg may be declared *neutral*, and a decision may be arrived at with respect to Luxemburg withdrawing from its obligation to Germany.

This little promemoria was unquestionably written *before*

\* Minister for the Netherlands in Berlin.

† Of the Netherlands, Statthalter of Luxemburg.

yesterday's news from the Hague. The views are, nevertheless, always *intéressant* in case France should at this moment abandon her designs on Luxemburg, which I hardly believe after *these* communications, which speak of a definite threat of war in case of the Dutch refusal.

The Grand-Duke of Weimar and his wife are continually requesting me to reply as quickly as possible to *this* enclosure and to the two former ones. It appears to me that for the present my reply could only run about as follows: "I must await the Paris reception of the Hague refusal before making any statement whatever, that the neutrality idea could be entertained only when peace is assured, but that I would propose that this idea should be made to us by Holland, and not the reverse."

Should you not be able to come to me to-day, send Savigny to me at 4 o'clock to inform me of your view on this matter.

Please also tell Podbielski to report to me at 4 o'clock on the sitting, unless he can send me notes during the same.

I have just received the Paris telegram of yesterday afternoon. From this it appears that France is not abandoning the affair. The *final* sentence necessitates the acceleration of Abeken compilations! W.

131

BERLIN, April 13, '67.

I beg most humbly to report to your Royal Majesty, that Count Tauffkirchen has arrived here this evening from Munich, with directions to go from here to Vienna, in order to negotiate in the name of his Government with the Austrian Cabinet for a mutual understanding, and possibly for an alliance.

As the object of the mission calls for speedy settlement, Count Tauffkirchen wishes to set out for Vienna to-morrow evening, but to be received previously by your Royal Majesty, and I therefore permit myself most respectfully to ask



whether your Majesty will be graciously pleased to receive him to-morrow, in the course of the forenoon? Should your Majesty consent, will your Royal Majesty be gracious enough to fix the hour at which the Count may report himself.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Before I receive Count Tauffkirchen I must confer with you, in order to learn the purport of his instructions, as I have no idea what proposals will be made in Vienna, and what it may be hoped to attain there, so that I may judge therefrom what instructions we would have to give.

The long despatch from Goltz on his conversation with Moustier, returned to you to-day, has again given me the *éveille* as to how half thrown-out views are taken and finally used to bring about a conflict.

This is the history *du piège* which we are credited with laying for the Emperor Napoleon in the Luxemburg question. Your yesterday's report on Wimpffen's \* proposal and the reply you gave have, therefore, got terribly on my nerves, because, if this proposal went to Paris, and again half thrown-out views of ours should afterwards prove impracticable, we should once more be regarded as the trap setters!!

This is why the interview with Count Tauffkirchen is so very difficult for me.

If you will come to me to-morrow at 1 o'clock, I could appoint T. for 3 o'clock, in which case please let him know.

W.

April 13, '67, 11.30 P. M.

132

B., May 7, '67.

In gratitude to God that you were preserved to the Fatherland and to me, I am mindful of this anniversary † day.

\* Austrian Ambassador at Berlin.

† Of Blind's outrage.

What have you accomplished in the year?! Only that you may have health for the future.

Your grateful

W.

## 133

WEISBADEN, *July 31, '67.*

In case you should not be able to come to Ems, I must express to you in these few lines my anxiety concerning the regulations for the organisation of the new Provinces, which I recently executed in Berlin. As these regulations, according to von der Heydt and Count Lippe, had been discussed in the sittings of the Ministry of State, and as you were in Berlin at the time (although the above-mentioned reports were made to me after your departure), I assumed that you had been present at those sittings, and had agreed to everything, so that I signed at once, as I almost always do when you have acquiesced, especially in the case of voluminous matters which I cannot examine in detail. Although I remonstrated on individual points, for instance with respect to the abolition of gambling, lotteries, etc., these were represented to me as being so notoriously necessary, and as never having given particular ground for complaint, that I signed. Directly I arrived at Ems I learned from the newspapers, and from letters and addresses with which I was inundated, that an extremely prejudicial revolution had taken place in the public opinion even of our best political annexations, which has all been but too surely confirmed by Möller,\* Maday,† Diest,‡ and Voigts Rhetz,§

\* Ed. v. Möller, at that time President of the Province of Hesse-Nassau.

† Guido v. Madai, at that time President of Police in Frankfurt-on-the-Main.

‡ Gustav v. Diest, at that time President in Weisbaden.

§ Governor General of Hanover, and General in command of the 10th Army Corps.

Then came your telegram of yesterday about the treasure, and before that your communications to Abeken on the bad reception of the regulations in Berlin—so that I can only now, for the first time, conjecture that you were not present at the last Berlin consultations, and that, therefore, all the regulations were submitted to me without your being previously acquainted with the matter! It is only after consultations held at Ems that I am aware of what considerable and exhaustive remonstrances were made by the above-named gentlemen against the proposed regulations; *no* mention was made to me of this by the Ministers who laid the matter before me, so that I confess I am very keenly touched, as I told von der Heydt at Ems.

Remedies must be found for specific cases, as has already been done for the Hessian treasure; for Frankfurt-on-the-Main, too, everything possible must be done *temporarily*, also for the lottery in the other countries. Please, therefore, tell the Ministers in Berlin, what they will already have seen from my separate alterations, that I am very disagreeably touched, and await a thoroughly exhaustive report from you in order that speedy remedy in many particulars may be effected.

Your

WILHELM.

134

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, August 27, '67.

Some time ago you threw out the idea that if I went to Norderney I might take the opportunity of paying a visit to Hanover; everything depends, however, on the necessity for my presence here. As the season is so advanced, Norderney seems to me hardly feasible, although I am not to bathe, but only to breathe sea air! but if there is no society the whole thing would be very *ennuyant*. On the other hand, the visit to Hanover might be arranged if I should decide to go on the 4th. to Cologne for the 25 years' jubilee!!

of the laying of the foundation stone for the restoration of the Cathedral.

The question is how long you desire my presence here now, or after that Cologne-Hanover excursion? Everything depends on that; in any case I would visit Hanover only on my return from Cologne, if the present is indeed a suitable time?? An extension of the tour to East Friesland would delay it exceedingly, if I were needed here earlier afterwards. Moreover, I feel so well in the Babelsberg *mountain* air and quietness, that I should leave it very unwillingly, though that is a secondary consideration. Please let me know your opinion.

WILHELM.

### 135

BABELSBERG, *September 3, '67.*

Count Eulenburg informed me yesterday that Count Otto Stolberg will really accept the position of Ober-Präsident \* in Hanover, though not for eternity, but that he felt somewhat dismayed at the approaching meeting of the Provincial Landtag. General von Voigts Rheetz made the proposition to me to-day that for this reason Count Otto St. might be given the assistance of Hardenberg, and I directed him to discuss this with you. Do you consider this practicable? I think Count Otto and the cause would thereby be benefited. Could one not make Hardenberg Vice-Präsident in Hanover?

WILHELM.

### 136

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG *September 12, '67.*

I forgot to speak to you yesterday about my present travelling plans, in order to know whether they run in any

\* The Ober-Präsident of a province in Prussia occupies a similar position to that of the Lord-Lieutenant of an English county. (Translator's note.)

way counter to the necessities of public business? My project would be to go to Baden on the 17th. and *chemin faisant* to receive the Grand-Duke of Hesse at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, then go to him *en visite*, and so to Baden. From there I would inspect the Baden army corps near Rastatt on the 21st., and on the 25th. or 26th. go to the island of Mainau where the 30th.\* is to be celebrated; on October 1st. the rendezvous with the King of Wurtemberg would probably take place—I know nothing yet of the Bavarian King—and then the visit to Hohenzollern. Whether I then return at once to Berlin, or stay a few days more in Baden, would depend on business. I feel the inconveniences attaching to my not being *in loco* during the important sittings, as it is often enough a matter of hours in arriving at decisions, from sitting to sitting; but the 30th. in any case demands my absence. Tell me, therefore, your opinion *franchement*.

The newspapers say that Quade has been appointed for the debates † in question. We must arrange about this disagreeable question before I leave, before the debates commence.

In the enclosed papers is given what, according to my opinion, is quite a false conception of Lavalette's ‡ political standpoint, which must be refuted, in order that his policy, if, though Goltz does not believe it at the moment, he became Foreign Minister, should not be trumpeted forth by the newspapers as a war policy.

WILHELM.

137

BERLIN, September 13, '67.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I tender my most respectful thanks for the gracious letter of yesterday, and do not believe that business here would

\* The Queen's birthday.

† On the Prague peace.

‡ French Minister for Foreign Affairs.



suffer if your Majesty left on the 17th., provided that some were settled before then. I mean particularly the Kur-Hessian treasure and the Frankfurt affair. Both are being dealt with in the Finance Ministry so very dilatorily, as though it were intended to let Ocbr. 1st. arrive before the present formally-legal situation is changed.

The bills for the Reichstag are more of a technical nature, and will hardly require fresh decisions on the part of your Majesty, unless anything quite unforeseen transpires. Early in October your Majesty will be able to decide, according as things have developed by then, whether the public business renders your Majesty's speedy return expedient, or makes a continued stay in Baden appear practicable.

At the same time I beg for your Majesty's commands as to whether Abeken may join your Majesty on the 17th.<sup>1</sup>

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

<sup>1</sup> Certainly.

Written on the top of the front page:

Agreed. You will please direct the Minister for Finance in my name to report to me on the Frankfurt and the public treasure matters by the 16th. W.

*September 13, '67.*

138

*Sunday, November 24, '67.*

Your Majesty was yesterday gracious enough to promise me leave of absence for the day after to-morrow, on account of the shooting party at Stassfurth, but the fixing of the sitting of the Federal Council for Wednesday renders it somewhat difficult for me to avail myself of it.

Should there, however, be no prospect to-morrow morning of urgent business for the day after to-morrow, I would still, in view of the good effect it would have on my health,

very much like to leave for Stassfurth at midday to-morrow, should your Majesty not command otherwise. I would be back again here early on Wednesday.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Quite agree.

W.

November 24, '67.

### 139

B., February 12, '68.

If, as I must suppose, you agree to the choice of Lieut.-General von Beyer as War Minister for Baden, please corroborate this with but two words, so that I can reply at once, in order not to protract the inconveniences of a Ministerial crisis.

WILHELM.

### 140

B., February 22, '68.

Since our conversation I have spoken to Costenoble. He mentioned a Geheimer Obber-Regierungs-Rath Schumann, in the Ministry for Agriculture, as the most fitting successor, and Mühler also considers him very suitable. As you have not mentioned him to me, your attention has evidently not been drawn to him. I therefore mention him here, as I must, of course, attach much importance to Costenoble's opinion.

WILHELM.

At this moment the Queen sends me the enclosed.

For months past Queen Victoria seems to have written and spoken to my wife of her *personal* aversion to seeing the Hanoverian Royal family transfer their residence to England, as she has often talked to me about it, and I believe that all the *political* reasonings are advanced in support

of this *personal* disinclination, in order to prevent such a change of residence.

I will not deny these *raisonnements* a certain *portée*, but I do not estimate them so highly as they are represented here to be. As there was never any question at Hietzing \* of the said change of residence, but rather the contrary, I send you the enclosure only for your information *en cas de besoin*.

141

BERLIN, February 25, '68.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to announce that there is nothing urgent for me to report on to-day; the Minister for the Interior, however, desires to ascertain whether your Majesty will be gracious enough to close the Landtag in person, so that the speech may be drawn up accordingly.

The Ministry of State discussed the question at its last sitting, and would beg your Majesty most humbly not to depart from the custom, which has become a constitutional rule, of closing the Landtag in person, as the resolutions of the majority during the session have, in spite of speeches by individuals, been very satisfactory. As the matter is pressing, I beg for intimation, in a marginal note, of your Majesty's gracious decision.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

I was of opinion that the session should not be closed by me, in order that the nimbus of this act might not be diminished by its becoming stereotype, the more so as this will or would be the 4th. occasion within a very short time. If, after this opinion, your colleagues are still of the same mind, I would acquiesce!!

W.

February 26, '68.

\* The residence of the Hanoverian Royal family. (Translator's note.)

142

B., May 5, '68.

The enclosure, marked with blue pencil, requires a few words, as we have not yet discussed the address question at all. The enclosure says that you and I wish to have the address. As far as I am concerned, I explained recently to Prince Hohenlohe (the Minister), Ratibor, and Roggenbach at tea, that I did not consider it desirable to have an address, as this *would* and indeed *must* give rise to a discussion on the political situation of the south towards the north which I must desire to see avoided, especially at the present stage of the development of Germany. A draft for the address, containing the controversial points I fear so much, has, however, already been introduced, so that the diametrically opposed speeches urging acceptance or refusal must bring up everything, which, as the newspapers already hint, will lead to a *chicane*. As, therefore, the discussion I feared so much can no longer be prevented, the question is:

1. what attitude shall we take towards it and
2. what reply shall we make if the address is accepted in its main points?

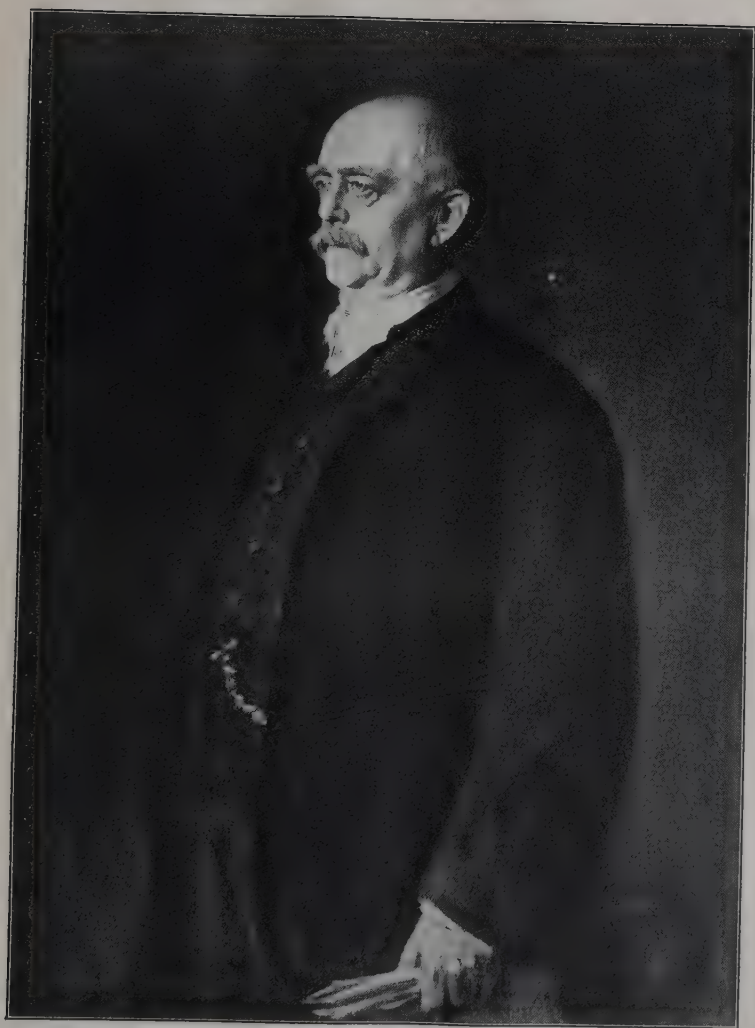
If the battle is to begin on Thursday, I would expect you to-morrow, the 6th., between 7 and 9 in the evening, to discuss matters.

WILHELM.

(Enclosures.)

*(Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung, May 4, 1868.)*

Berlin. As regards the attitude of the Prussian Government to the Address question, the Federal Chancellor is outwardly very reserved. It is said, however, that privately he is using all his influence for an address which, indeed, if it is really the true expression of Parliament, can only be wished for by the Prussian Government at such a critical moment as



BISMARCK.





the present. It is also said that the King would gladly welcome such an address, however colourless it might be, if it only emphasised the unanimous will of the nation, and the President of the Federal Chancellory, Herr Delbrück, is also stated to have declared himself of this opinion. The foreign Military Attachés were among the guests at the gala dinner given in the Schloss yesterday in honour of the Zoll Parliament. The French Attaché, who was in high spirits, wittily remarked to his neighbour at table that: "Really only Main wine should be drunk to-day." The introductions were not without comic intermezzos and mistakes. The clerical deputy Diepolder, from Bavaria, was, by an inadvertence, presented to the Queen as Herr Crämer, from Doos, and had to submit with good grace to his countrymen's witticisms on the misunderstanding.

(*Spener Zeitung*, May 4, 1868.)

Berlin. The *Revue contemporaine* writes in the political summary of the number which has just appeared: Our attention is now directed towards Prussia, the Zoll Parliament is opened, and although the King, in the speech he delivered before the representatives of all Germany, has given fresh proofs of his conciliatory and pacific sentiments, the Zoll Parliament is evidently to be watched with apprehension and jealousy. The Imperial Government cannot decide for implicit confidence, it will give no effective surety for universal peace, and while the Prussian Government continues to offer it assistance, it increases its complaints and allows its deeds to contradict its words. What is said and done in Paris is known in Berlin, as is the feverish activity displayed with the armaments, the defiant articles appearing in a certain semi-official press are all read, and yet the language employed there is still temperate, and in striking contrast to the swaggering tone adopted by very high French officials. The shrewd politician, whose sagacious advice King William

never lacks, closes his eyes to what he does not wish to see, he knew perfectly well why the Danish Minister for War went to Paris, he knew that General Raaslöf had been Marshal Niel's companion in arms in Africa, and that, if these two gentlemen cherished the desire to meet again, one of them certainly expressed the wish first. Herr von Bismarck knows that the Danish Minister did not ask permission of the French Minister to pay a visit to Paris. He has also heard of the 40,000 Chassepots which the French are said to have supplied to the Danes. While all these facts were being published in the newspapers with more or less accuracy, the Berlin Cabinet, well enough informed as it was of all that was true in them, remained quite composed, and prepared the peaceful speech with which the Zoll Parliament was opened. It goes still further, it will still persevere in its fixed determination not to pick up the glove thrown down before it. Prussia will be responsible for no conflict should a conflict break out, which seems to us very improbable. We are hurriedly organising our mobile National Guard, we are everywhere multiplying our orders for Chassepot rifles, and the Prussian Government sends part of its army on furlough. We should be wise to follow this example. The distressful condition of our finances calls for economy, and should suggest to us the advisability of sending home on leave the half of the army, which is sapping the country. We are animated with quite other different motives. We think of fresh expenditure for the fleet, which is not yet sufficiently protected by the thick coating of iron-plates, fresh inventions lead to this fresh progress, and demand prejudicial expenditure for the alteration of our naval equipments. Prussia calmly looks on, and it will not be Prussia's fault if we ruin ourselves, drain our country, and exhaust it morally and materially, and then sink to a second rate State because we were not clever enough politicians to keep in the first rank.

143

BERLIN, *June 13, '68.*

YOUR ROYAL MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully that I may be graciously permitted to follow the advice given me by the doctor who is treating me, to go into the country. Dr. Struck considers that in the present stage of my convalescence a stay in the country is absolutely necessary, and confidently expects from the fresher air and rural quietness the best effects on my nerves and general condition of health. My own feelings are entirely in accord with the doctor's advice, and make me wish not to postpone my departure longer. I beg, therefore, to ask for your Royal Majesty's most gracious assent to my leaving Berlin on the morning of the day after to-morrow, Monday, the 15th. inst., for Varzin.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Of course I must assent! and I request you now to submit in writing what was agreed upon. I hope to be able to pay you a visit to-morrow evening, between 6 and 7 o'clock.

WILHELM.

*June 13, '68.*

144

EMS, *August 8, '68.*

My handwriting shall but briefly disturb your repose; I send you enclosed fresh aphorisms on Italy by my son, as he wishes it. I could not have waited longer, as he refers to many personalities who have come into contact with Italy and Prussia during the past few weeks, and I think it good that you now know my son's views on these personalities, although they were evidently written before the present intermezzo.

You will remember that on his return from Florence my son stated that he had followed our directions, and had

treated La Marmora coolly, but politely, as Usedom \* had also recommended him to do. You will see that the enclosure is almost an apology for this man, in which he adversely criticises the whole Prussian Legation, including Bernhardi. I am quite at a loss to know who has furnished my son with materials for *this* criticism; as he arraigns our Legation, *the latter* cannot have furnished the material, unless one of the members has vituperated the others, which has also happened before.

As regards Usedom, we have long been of opinion that it is no longer desirable to let him stay too long at Florence. Nevertheless, the present does not seem to me the right moment for a change. For, although in conformity with truth we declared that his note, or rather his private communication, of June 17, '66 did not proceed from the Government, that *démenti* may refer only to the *form* of that communication of a plan of operation, as otherwise that plan was perfectly correct from the *military* standpoint, and contained what Prussia must desire and expect from the Italian army and alliance. To recall Usedom, as my son wishes, would at this moment be giving a *démenti* also to the proposed *operation* and would mean flying in the face of military criticism in Prussia and Italy. From this point of view the semi-official rejoinders in our newspapers to the note of June 17, '66 must be very cautiously drawn up, so that the *form* and the *matter* are and remain strictly distinct.

I learn with pleasure that your rest is doing you a great deal of good, but that it is not desirable to curtail the same.

How very unfortunate it is that the accident † should have befallen your wife just at this time; please express to her my warmest sympathy. I am sorry to hear that the fracture still causes her pain.

\* Prussian Minister at Florence.

† Fracture of the ribs through falling from a chair.



I have felt very well here, although I have no idea why I am here! The heat was unbearable during the first fortnight; now it is better, though still oppressive enough in the narrow valley. I shall go to Homburg on the 13th. for a week, to seek rest and air in the woods, then I shall go to Berlin, and later to the Duchies for inspection purposes. The Hanover episode has turned out according to my wish very satisfactorily, as also that at Worms, quite in accordance with your plan.

Now I must say good-bye, wishing you pleasant rest and *ennui*, though this will hardly be possible for you!

Your

faithfully devoted, grateful  
WILHELM.

145

BADEN, October 22, '68.

Very grateful for your letter of the 19th. inst., I am glad to see that you were pleased with my expedient to enable you to keep the historical yellow collar,\* and with the arrangement concerning the position of chief of the regiment to which your former yellow collar belonged.†

I am truly sorry that you need rural quietness until the end of November, as it shows that you have not yet quite recovered your old elasticity, and I consent to this prolonged leave of absence only too willingly, the more so as you express your readiness to proceed to Berlin *en cas de besoin*. I fear that this will perhaps be necessary, as I hardly believe that von der Heydt will be able, without your help, to combat the opposition in the finance question which is only too surely to be expected. The newspapers already point to the treasure and the reduction of the army, both unfeasible

\* By placing him *à la suite* of the Magdeburg Cuirassier Regiment No. 7.

† Of the Magdeburg Landwehr Regiment No. 26.

means to balance the budget. I cannot tell you how concerned I am about this finance question, as no one had expected such a deficit after the year 1866!!

I had never thought of Witzleben for the chief department of accounts, as he seems to me so eminently fitted for his present post; I can advance nothing, however, against your argumentation, if you should persuade him. There was a question of Count Eulenburg, of Marienwerder, if he were not given the Presidency of East Prussia, so as not to place him under a younger man. But on that matter I await your further suggestions. I am alarmed to hear that you really believe you broke two ribs,\* and must suppose you have not been treated for that, as I hear from you for the first time that there is a possibility of this being the case! Therefore, redoubled care.—With my best regards to your wife and daughter,

Your faithfully devoted, grateful

WILHELM.

146

BERLIN, *November 2, '68.*

Your letter of the 27th. crossed mine, so that I was not able to reply to it before I had received a second. This second letter I have now received. If it were possible for me to feel more esteem and gratitude towards you, I should have done so after reading that letter. In view of your previous utterances and opinions, I must value exceedingly highly the decision you have arrived at concerning my representations. We stood opposed to each other with different views, and I, of course, was placed in the difficult position of finally deciding the matter in obedience to my conviction—when you met me in such a friendly manner, and spared me a *dissensus* between us. Receive from me for this the true thanks of a friend.

\* By falling from a horse on August 22, 1868.

I still appreciate the doubts you have in the said *matérie*, and share your fears that the same question will present itself again next year ; by that time, however, experience will have been gained which will help us to find the path we must tread. For the present my kingly heart has been spared a terribly grave decision, which would have laid fresh burdens on my people just at *this* moment ! And what conditions would the opposition have imposed on us, if it had given its assent to the additional taxation ? All that, it is to be hoped, is obviated for the present. Nevertheless, it is a serious campaign which faces us the day after to-morrow ; may Providence guide us for our good.—

The suggestions you make to me with respect to the personal changes have not yet enabled me to arrive at any decision. As a business man, Horn would be in the right place at Königsberg, but his informal bearing will give offence to the aristocracy, although they are liberalised. I think it very fitting to send Kühlwetter instead of him to Posen, although Count Königsmarck would also be suitable. I hear from several sides praises of the decided capacities of Count Eulenburg,\* of the Ministry for the Interior, and he is suggested to me for the post of President at Königsberg, (only not by his Minister-brother) where he is also desired. His *youth* and his *present* post would not weigh with me against this, what do you think ? In that case Eulenburg must leave Marienwerder for Potsdam.—And now adieu !

Your faithful friend,  
WILHELM.

147

A most hearty welcome to Berlin ! May God give you strength and vigour for the task you are taking up again ;—

\* Count Botho zu Eulenburg.

above all, moderation in the work, especially at the beginning. I shall expect you to-morrow at 10.30.

Your grateful

WILHELM.

*December 2, '68.*

148

BERLIN, *December 21, '68.*

You will have heard that Prince Carl, on account of his sciatica, is to spend the rest of the winter at Nice, but that he intends to go there by way of Paris, and purposes appearing with the Princess at the Court. Although I consider it *déplacé* enough to journey for one's health in *that way*, and to attend the Court in Paris (and in knee-breeches), the question is whether, in view of the pending Spanish and Oriental question, it is desirable for a Prussian Prince to expose himself to a political conversation with the Emperor, although we fairly harmonise in both questions. But there is still another very unpleasant incidental point to discuss. Since her 2nd. visit to Spain, the Princess Carl has shown a misplaced intimacy with the banished Queen of that country.\* The latter is in Paris!; considering this intimacy, it would be hardly justifiable for the Princess to ignore the Queen in her adversity, and not to visit her. But how very *embarrassant* for all parties and relationships such a visit would be? I would, therefore, propose to my brother that, if he sets such store on the visit to Paris, he might pay it on his return journey, when he is quite recovered in health, and by that time many matters will have been cleared up. Please let me know your opinion on your return; the Prince intends to leave on the 28th., and I have desired him not to arrange his Paris digression until I know your views.

Your

WILHELM.

\* Isabella.

149

BERLIN, *December 24, '68.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

With my wishes for the festival I lay at your Majesty's feet my most respectful thanks for the most gracious Christmas present. The tasteful work forms a modern illustration of the Prussian "Light and Sword," and, in point of fact, light from *above*, as it falls here on the brave musketeer.

Benedetti has just brought me the information that France, with reference to the proposal made by your Majesty's Government, and to the reception it found in St. Petersburg and London, invites the powers (5 great powers, Italy, and Turkey) which signed in Paris in the year 1856, to a Conference in Paris on January 2.\* I most respectfully beg your Majesty to answer in the affirmative an official letter from Benedetti, which may be expected to-morrow, and then request further orders with regard to the authorisation of Solms.†

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

The illustration equally surprised and delighted me. Of course the acceptance of the invitation is to be signified to Benedetti. If only the Turk accepts! If you have confidence in the capacities with which Solms is credited, I agree to authorising him.

WILHELM.

B., *December 25, '68.*

150

BERLIN, *February 14, '69.*

Enclosed I forward you a fresh wail from the town of Memel, which the latter has sent to General von Man-

\* For the settlement of the Greek-Turkish conflict.

† Count Eberhard zu Solms-Sonnenwalde, Prussian Envoy at Madrid.



teuffel on account of the Tilsit-Memel railway. At the Schloss ball I gave the deputation in connection with this matter the answer pressed on me by Count Itzenplitz and von der Heydt. I did not then, however, hear the Ministers speak of the concession being *already* granted for the Kovno-Libau railway, but, on the contrary, remember that they said *ours* would be ready long before *that* line was constructed. Things have turned out quite differently, as Czar Alexander has not only granted the concession for the line, but, according to the information just given in Königsberg by General von Tottleben, this railway is to be proceeded with at once.

Add to this:

1. that the Memel-Tilsit Railway Company will also undertake to build the bridges, 2. that the Company will be dissolved if the preliminary condition of its formation—that the bill for the project be laid before the Chambers this year—is not fulfilled, 3. that the interest guarantee does not come into force until after the expiration of 3 years, and that 4. if the Libau railway is ready before the Memel railway, Memel will undoubtedly lose the greater part of its trade.

These are all arguments which oblige me to revert again to the question, in order that everything may be done to bring the bills at once into the Chambers, which are acquainted with the matter through last year's debate, so that they can be quickly disposed of by a final debate. You will, therefore, immediately communicate my view to von der Heydt and Itzenplitz.

WILHELM.

151

February 21, '69.

Do read the article in to-day's *Spener Zeitung*, page 2, at the bottom of column 3, on Frankfurt-on-the-Main!

W.

152

BERLIN, February 22, '69.

The article mentioned in the enclosure is the work of the deputy Wehrenpfennig, whose wife comes from Frankfurt, who is closely connected with Patow and his wife, and who uses the writer Kerkhof, whom I knew in Frankfurt as an enemy of Prussia, to circulate similar articles in the *Cologne* and *Augsburg Gazettes*. The article was printed in the *Spener Zeitung*, because it was believed your Majesty would thus obtain cognizance of it without the necessity of special steps being taken to accomplish this object. The Frankfurt ladies, who get these articles written in the interest of their mother city, endeavour also to further their end by letters and verbally, in the hopes of influencing your Majesty's decisions.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Return to Wehrmann.

Nevertheless, this newspaper article says exactly what I have wished for 2½ years past, and which is now attained.

W.

March 2, '69.

153

BERLIN, February 22, '69.

The bearer \* of these lines has communicated to me the commission with which you charged him!

How can you possibly imagine that I could even think of acceding to your idea! *It is my greatest happiness* † to live with you, and to thoroughly agree with you! How can you be so hypochondriac as to allow one single difference to mislead you into taking the extreme step! You wrote to me from Varzin at the time of the difference in the matter

\* Privy Councillor Wehrmann.

† Twice underlined in the original.

of making up the deficit, that you were indeed of another opinion than I, but that when you entered on your post you regarded it as your duty when you had, as in duty bound, expressed your opinion, always to conform to my decisions. What, then, has now so utterly changed the opinions you so nobly expressed 3 months ago? I repeat that there is but one single difference, that concerning Frankfurt-on-the-Main. The Usedomiana I discussed exclusively yesterday in writing, according to your wish; the House affair will adjust itself; we were agreed on the filling of the appointments, but the *individuals* are not willing! What reason is there then for going to the extreme?

Your name stands higher in Prussian history than that of any other Prussian statesman. And I am to let that man go? Never. Quiet and *prayer* \* will adjust everything. Your most faithful friend † W.

## 154

February, 1869.

The very gracious letter with which your Majesty has honoured me would deeply shame me if the reasons, which, after a hard conflict, impelled me to the resolution I took, were those mentioned by your Majesty. A single difference of opinion, in what is comparatively such an insubordinate question as the Frankfurt business, would never have induced me to take such a serious and, according to my own feelings, such a very reluctant step. The conception of my post in the service of your Majesty which I avowed from Varzin, and to which your Majesty refers, I still hold to-day, even if your Majesty had not been gracious enough to ask for the duteous expression of my opinion before arriving at a decision in the Frankfurt affair. My readiness to subordinate myself to the orders of your Majesty *after* your Majesty had

\* Twice underlined in the original.

† Three times underlined in the original.

weighed my counter arguments does not come into question in this case. Your Majesty's resolves were prepared and notified in Frankfurt by other organs, not connected with the Ministry.

Notwithstanding this, the question whether, through your Majesty's clemency, a present should be bestowed on the city of Frankfurt, the value of which, in my opinion, was not reconcilable with the considerations due to the tax-payers, and was not dictated by policy, would not have induced me, for the first time in my life, to beg your Majesty to release me from the service. My only motive for this is the inadequacy of my powers, and of my health, for the manner of service demanded by your Majesty. Your Majesty will perhaps most graciously remember that I was first taken seriously ill at the beginning of December 1865, and since that time the ever-increasing burden of business has absolutely prevented my becoming completely restored to health. Not quite three months ago, I thought I was again equal to the regular course of business, at least during the parliamentary period, but it is now evident this was a mistake, and that I overestimated my powers. The whole of the service-business devolving on me can be expedited, even with the application of my every force, only if your Majesty grants me every facility which can lie in the choice of persons working with me, in the fullest measure of your Majesty's confidence, and in the freedom of movement thereby permitted. The accomplishment becomes impossible, however, when it is not supported by the unanimous co-operation of all the proper organs with your Majesty, and when business which has been regularly despatched comes up repeatedly for fresh treatment, owing to differences of opinion among the parties concerned. It is far easier to take resolutions, and to carry them out, than to prove convincingly that they are the right ones.

The obstructions occurring in the artificial mechanism of

a constitutional state have not as yet seriously interfered with the regular course of business. The task of securing agreement on difficult questions between your Majesty and eight Ministers, and after that of keeping in touch with three parliamentary bodies, and of paying the necessary regard to allied and foreign Governments, has up till the present been approximately fulfilled. In my most respectful opinion, the determinative preliminary condition of this fulfilment was to be found in the circumstance that your Majesty has never, as long as I have had the honour of being in your Majesty's service, again called into question a decision taken after the Ministers were heard on the subject, and that, before arriving at or altering a decision, your Majesty has always heard the councillor appointed by your Majesty himself for the work of each responsible department. If, lately, extra-official influences have been able to excite your Majesty's keen interest in individual local questions, without at the same time being subjected to a responsibility for affairs as a whole, and if, in this way, decisions, which your Majesty has taken after hearing Ministers, and has proclaimed, are modified and occupy the Ministers' working powers for weeks at a time through being submitted to fresh consideration, the burden of work thereby falling to the share of your Majesty's chosen Ministers is increased beyond the possibility of accomplishment.

Moreover, when every nerve has been strained to cope with the work, the feeling remains that current business has been neglected. The despondency into which I am thrown when I reflect on these things is augmented by the circumstance that, in questions relating to the personnel, your Majesty's personal kindness towards each one of your servants, as opposed to the strict necessities of the service, carries a weight which prejudices the interests of those who have to bear the responsibility for imperfect and uncompleted work.

It was in the year 1864 that I first begged your Majesty



for the dismissal of Usedom, and both at that time and often since then I have laid stress on the complaints against this Envoy, which are now supported by documentary evidence. My correspondence with Usedom concerning his derelictions of duty in 1864 and until the present time fills volumes, at which I have had to work many hours and many a day while in bodily suffering, and to the great detriment of other business. Last Sunday week I took the liberty of stating verbally to your Majesty that my honour forbade me to serve longer with Count Usedom, and I believe that in the army, where the spirit of comradeship is so strongly developed, and in positions with a less important bearing on the destinies of the country, your Majesty would at once have coincided with this view, and have permitted me to act accordingly.

With regard to Under-Secretary of State Sulzer, the first motions for his removal on account of his unsuitability date from the beginning of the year 1863. Your Majesty will perhaps remember the difficult negotiations which some years ago resulted, not in his dismissal, as the Ministry proposed, but in the diminution of his functions. Now the Minister for the Interior is in imminent danger of succumbing to over work through lack of support, and from the day when he becomes ill, which I fear is very near at hand, the efficacy of the Minister for the Interior absolutely ceases, as there is no one to take the business in hand. This state of affairs has increased my work with respect to the arrangement of the districts to an indescribable degree.

I venture to trust that your Majesty will believe that I suffer severely under the pressure of these circumstances, and that I have exacted from my own exhausted forces every effort within the bounds of possibility, before I could express the wish to leave your Majesty's service. It is only with great reluctance that I mention these details to your Majesty. I cannot, however, expose myself to the suspicion of presump-

tion, of which I should certainly be guilty were I to wish to leave your Majesty's service on account of a difference of opinion in a single money question.

I am impelled to my most respectful request to be released from the service, solely by my inability to serve your Majesty in the way your Majesty desires. The experience of the last few months has deprived me of the sanguine hope that I was still equal to the fulfilment of my duties. The difficulties of these duties are great enough in themselves, but they are increased by counter currents against which I feel that I have not strength to combat. The fights which devolve on me in my office have brought on me the disfavour of high-placed persons, and the aversion of influential persons. My only equivalent for this has been in the fact that your Majesty was satisfied, and in your exalted position your Majesty cannot realise how heavily every moment of dissatisfaction, indeed every difference of opinion with his Royal master weighs on the heart of a devoted servant, and how my emotions always affect my bodily suffering. Your Majesty will, I venture to trust, be indulgent towards this weakness, as it is the outcome, though a morbid one, of the love I bear to your Majesty's person. But it makes me incapable of satisfying the claims of the service in the manner required by your Majesty. I have not the feeling that a long life will be accorded me, and fear that my organisation inclines to develop as did that of his late Majesty. I cannot ask that your Majesty shall make allowances for my weak state of health, in matters connected with the service. I shall, of course, conduct the negotiations with the Reichstag, which is about to meet, in accordance with your Majesty's wishes, if your Majesty will only grant me the prospect that I may soon withdraw, to devote the time which God may still allot me in retirement to repose and the grateful recollection of the favour your Majesty has shown towards me.

V. BISMARCK.

155

BERLIN, *February 26, '69.*

When I wrote you on the 22nd., in my consternation at Wehrmann's communication, a very hasty but all the more urgent letter, in order to restrain you from carrying out a design which would have had such ruinous consequences, I trusted that your reply would show that you finally listened to my representations; and I was not mistaken. Thanks, hearty thanks, for not disappointing my expectations!

With regard to the main grounds which now lead you to think of your retirement, I thoroughly recognise their cogency, and you will remember how urgently I requested you, when you resumed the conduct of business in December of last year, to provide yourself with every possible alleviation, lest you should again sink under the burden and mass of work which it was to be foreseen would devolve on you. It appears, unfortunately, that you have not found such an alleviation (not even the disburdening of Lauenburg) feasible, and that my fears have been realised in an increased degree, and to an extent that has brought you to harbour mischievous thoughts, and to take calamitous resolutions. If, as you say, difficulties have arisen in the mastering of certain business, no one regrets it more than I. Sulzer's position is a case in point. Some time ago I expressed my readiness to place him somewhere else, so that it is not my fault if this has not already been done, after Eulenburg himself arrived at the same conviction. If the Usedom affair has caused you a similar increase of business, that also cannot be laid to my charge, as his letter in his own defence, which it was not for me to suggest, demanded elucidation on your part. If I did not immediately agree to the settlement of the affair in accordance with your proposition, you must have been prepared for this when you perceived how surprised I was when I received intelligence from you of the

step you had *already taken* against Usedom. It was the middle of January when you made this announcement to me, barely three months after the La Marmora episode had begun to quieten down, so that I still held the opinion on Usedom's remaining at Turin which I wrote to you in the summer. The information which I received on February 13th. concerning Usedom's manner of conducting business, which rendered his removal from office a matter of necessity, if indeed it were not found necessary to order a disciplinary investigation, I laid on one side for a few days, as in the meantime I heard that Keudell, with your knowledge, had invited Usedom to take steps on his own behalf. And yet, before a reply came from Turin, I asked you on February 21st. what views you had about refilling this post, thus showing that I assented to its becoming vacant. And yet, on the 22nd. you took the decisive step again Wehrmann, one of the motives for which is said to be the Usedom affair. You give, as another motive, the circumstance that I did not request you to report to me again before I came to a conclusion, after having received the report of the Ministry of State in the Frankfurt-on-the-Main affair. As, however, your grounds and those of the Ministers of State were manifested so definitely by laying before me the bill and the report which accompanied it, (my signature, indeed, was demanded in the same hour that these were submitted to me, in order that it might at once be introduced into the Chambers) it appeared to me that another interview, with the object of determining my views and intention, was not called for. Had I been communicated with<sup>1</sup> *before* the Ministry of State decided to adopt a mode of procedure in the Frankfurt-on-the-Main question which entirely differed from my former declaration, the exchange of ideas would have led to a way being found out of the different views on the subject, and the divergence of opinion, the lack of co-operation, and the extra work which you rightly deplore, would have been

avoided. I endorse all that you now say about the difficulty of keeping the constitutional State machine in working order etc., only I cannot concede that *my* so necessary confidence in you and the other advisers of the Crown was in any way lacking.<sup>2</sup> You say yourself that this is the first time since 1862 that a difference has arisen between us, and that is to be sufficient proof that I no longer place confidence in my organs of government? No one appreciates more highly than I how fortunate it is that such differences have not arisen during six such stirring years; but this has spoiled us, happily spoiled us. Can, indeed, a monarch show greater confidence in his Premier than I, who have often in the past, and right up to the present, sent you private letters in which pending questions are discussed, so that you may be convinced that I do nothing of that kind behind your back? In sending you General von Manteuffel's letter on the Memel affair,<sup>3</sup> because it seemed to me to contain a *novum* (Tottleben), and I wished therefore to hear your opinion, in communicating to you General von Boyen's letter and some newspaper cuttings, with the remark that these *pièces exactly* reproduced what for years I have unvaryingly stated *everywhere* and *officially*—I should have thought that I could hardly increase my confidence. But that I should turn a deaf ear to the voices which at certain important moments are addressed to me in perfect confidence—you yourself will not require.

If I select some of the points advanced in your letter as grounds for your present frame of mind, and leave others undiscussed, I revert to your own remark that your spirits are in a morbid state; you feel weary, exhausted, a longing for rest steals over you. I understand all that perfectly well, for I feel the same;—but can or may I,\* for that reason, think of laying down my office?<sup>4</sup> Just as it is impossible for me to do that, so it is impossible for you! You do not

\* Twice underlined in the original.



belong only to yourself; your existence is too closely bound up with the history of Prussia, of Germany, and of Europe, for you to withdraw from a scene of action which you have helped to create. But in order that you may devote yourself entirely to this creation, you must \* arrange for an alleviation of your work, and I beg you most earnestly to make proposals to me with this object. For instance, you ought to avoid <sup>5</sup> the sittings of the Ministry of State when ordinary matters are being treated. Delbrück assists you so loyally, that he could take a great deal off your hands,<sup>6</sup> Reduce your personal, verbal reports to me to what is of supreme importance. Above all, however, never doubt my unaltered confidence and my unquenchable gratitude!!

Your

WILHELM.

Marginal notes by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> Free time would be necessary for that.

<sup>2</sup> Usedom!

<sup>3</sup> *Ordre!*

<sup>4</sup> No, but trust what one cannot *one's self* see in the case of 30 millions, and believe what a Minister states in his official capacity!

<sup>5</sup> I do.

<sup>6</sup> He does.

BERLIN, March 3, '69.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully that your Majesty may be graciously pleased, if I am not considerably better to-morrow, to permit Herr von Friesen † to take my place at the opening.‡ Although I am not so stiff as I was earlier in the

\* Twice underlined in the original.

† The representative of Saxony in the Federal Council.

‡ Of the Reichstag.

day, I fear that if there should be any draught in the Chapel, it might be dangerous to me.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Agreed, (if von der Heydt does not take it amiss, as the Austrian finances which, according to Wolff's telegram of to-day, so much surpass our own, will arouse some very unpleasant feelings.) You have my dispensation from the Church, if only you come to the ceremony

WILHELM.

# 157

BERLIN, May 25, '69.

Burgomaster Miquel, a member of the Reichstag, has submitted to me a copy, which I most humbly enclose, of the toast he contemplates proposing on the occasion of your Royal Majesty's presence in the Hall of Peace, at Osna-brück. He asks if it contains anything inappropriate. I would reply in the negative, but beg most respectfully to ask your Majesty's decision.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

Rather long, but otherwise nothing to object to; it must not, however, become known that I saw the *pièce* beforehand!!

W.

May 26, '69.

# 158

B., June 8, '69.

You sent word by Thile \* that you thought we must put on Turkish *cordons* for the Viceroy.† Is not that very much for someone who does not belong to the *family* of the Sultan, and in reality is only a Governor (Statthalter)? I thought, with my son, only to put on the Osmanli *star*, but

\* Secretary of State in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

† Tewfik Pasha.

the Prussian *cordon*, and all you the same. If, however, you really consider the Turkish *cordon* necessary,<sup>1</sup> please reply before 11.30 o'clock.

WILHELM.

Marginal note by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> No!

159

BABELSBERG, *June 29, '69.*

If Prince Gortchakoff desires to speak to me, I would receive him to-morrow, the 30th, at 2 o'clock, in Berlin, and in case you wished to inform me previously about your conversation with him, I would expect you from 1 o'clock onwards.

WILHELM.

160

BERLIN, *September 27, '69.*

I have to-day definitely sanctioned the financial proposals in the form in which von der Heydt intends to bring them in, and with which the Ministry of State agrees. The Finance Minister was, as you perceived, somewhat agitated on account of the manner you chose to answer two of his letters to you by a letter to Wehrmann, and by the conclusion of your letter, and wrote to me in his report that if he has lost my confidence also he wished not to delay his retirement for a moment. As I explained to you at our interview at Pansin \* and also previously, v. d. H. has not yet lost my confidence, and I cannot attach so much importance to his *échecs* in the last session as the Chamber did. Furthermore, I can and must not forget the services and the devotion of the Finance Minister in the year 1866, so that I must have much more important reasons than the present ones to make me consider it necessary to dismiss him. I

\* On September 9 and 10, 1869.

have told him this as a verbal answer to his above-mentioned letter, and have told the same to Roon and Eulenburg. I have thus settled this incident, which was all the more necessary as it would have been impossible to allow such an important change to be made immediately before the commencement of the Landtag session.

I was in duty bound to communicate this to you.

As the whole Ministry of State urgently wishes me to open the session in person, I have decided to do so.

Your  
WILHELM.

## 161

BERLIN, *October 27, '69.*

You know already that the Finance Minister crisis is settled, and in accordance with your wish.\* The arguments you adduce for the selection of Camphausen are exactly those I had in my mind in selecting him—at such a critical moment as this we must appoint an able financier, who at the same time inspires confidence. After Count Eulenburg and I myself had in vain used every argument to restrain von der Heydt from deserting his colours *before* the action, I quickly decided for Camphausen, and to bestow on v. d. Heydt the blackening† you desired for him, and have written him an autograph letter to express to him once more my thanks for, and my acknowledgment of his courage and his successful achievements, especially in the year 1866. He still believes that only his person is the drag which holds back the Chamber from all additional taxation, and believes that after his retirement the Chamber will be more tractable, and that one can only esteem. On the other hand, the Ministry, Forckenbeck, and public opinion believe that the Cham-

\* By the dismissal of v. der Heydt.

† The bestowal of the Order of the Black Eagle.

ber will grant no Minister an increase of taxation, as that would mean making the re-election of every member voting for it impossible. Camphausen is also of this latter opinion, and he is considering other means of covering the deficit, especially a temporary reduction of the sum devoted to the sinking-fund, as he firmly believes that this would not prejudice the State credit. He proposed this to v. d. Heydt in the summer, but received no answer, and v. d. Heydt did not mention this expedient to me when I entreated him to devise some other means than the additional taxation.

You do not rate Camphausen's political antecedents as highly as I and those who are now his colleagues do. I informed him, therefore, that his appointment would be impossible if he made any stipulations concerning the direction taken by the Government; that in particular there must be no question of making concessions to the liberal party in order to get supplies granted. He has promised both, although he said that if the moment were not so critical, when patriotism is the determining factor, he would not easily have been persuaded to join this Ministry. This is significant enough to recommend caution. I have had to advise you peremptorily, through Eulenburg, not to come here as you proposed, for to interrupt a Carlsbad cure is the worst thing that can be done! Besides, everything has been settled smoothly in accordance with the views advanced by yourself.

As regards your proposition to secure alleviation in your post by expanding Delbrück's position, I accept the same willingly, and await the proposals you will wish to make to the Ministry and to the Federal Council. For, that you need such alleviation everybody understands, and I have myself already made proposals to you in this sense. For the present, therefore, continue Carlsbad quietly, then rest, and then return! God be with you.

Your

WILHELM.



162

BERLIN, *December 4, '69.*

With heart-felt sympathy I have heard only to-day, and have just received your letter in confirmation, of the cause of your sudden journey! \* May God in His mercy avert from you and your wife a hard, painful blow!!

Your faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

163

Kindly inform Oubril that I will propose a toast to Czar A. II. at to-day's *diné* with a few words. If he asks whether he shall reply, I will assent, and of course permit him to give the answer in French, whereas I shall speak in German.

WILHELM.

*December 12, '69, 4 o'clock.*

164

BERLIN, *January 13, '70.*

Unfortunately, I have always forgotten to give you the Victory Medal, which should properly have been in *your* hands *first*, so I send it you now as the seal of your world-historical achievements

Your

WILHELM.

165

BERLIN, *January 13, '70.*

Most illustrious King,

Most gracious master,

I thank your Majesty most respectfully and most sincerely for graciously bestowing on me the Victory Medal, and for

\* From Varzin to Berlin, in order to go to the sick-bed of Count Herbert Bismarck, at Bonn. The journey was postponed on the receipt of more favourable news.

the honourable place your Majesty has been pleased to assign to me on this historical monument. The recollections which this impressed document will perpetuate among posterity acquire their especial importance for me and mine through the gracious words with which your Majesty has been pleased to accompany the presentation.

While my self-confidence experiences great satisfaction in the fact that it is permitted to me to see my name carried down to posterity under the wings of the royal Eagle, which points out to Germany the paths she must tread, my heart is still more gratified by the feeling that I am serving, with God's visible blessing, an hereditary master, to whom I am attached with a full and personal love, and to gain whose satisfaction is the reward I covet most in this life. With the expression of most respectful and unwavering fidelity,

Your Majesty's

most obedient servant till death,

V. BISMARCK.

166

B., January 22, '70.

As you told me recently that you do not possess the *pièces* referring to the Jerusalem occurrences, I now enclose them with my son's report, and shall be glad to have the whole back again after copies have been taken.

WILHELM.

What attitude does the Government think of taking towards the Duncker-Eberty press proposals!! Eulenburg seems to wish to go further into some of them, which, especially after the *latest French experiences* appears to me very venturesome!!

167

B., February 26, '70.

The enclosed \* has come on me like a bolt from the blue! once again a Hohenzollern candidate for a crown, and that of Spain. I had not the faintest suspicion, and joked recently with the Hereditary Prince about his name having been mentioned previously, and *both* † repudiated the idea with a like jest! As you have received details from the Prince, we must confer, although I am absolutely *against* the affair.

Your  
W.

I followed attentively your speech and *répliques*, and entirely approve them. They must, however, be read as a whole, for single sentences taken out *à la* Miquel might be interpreted quite wrongly!

168

My sincerest and most cordial wishes for to-day to you and all your house, which must remain closed to me to-day, —from

Your  
eternally grateful King,  
WILHELM.

B., April 1, '70.

169

BERLIN, May 21, '70.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to report my arrival, and most humbly to ask whether I may present myself at the Palace to-morrow about 12, before the sitting of the Ministry, which is to take place at 1.

V. BISMARCK.

\* Which has been lost.

† i. e. Father and son.

Marginal note by the King:

I am exceedingly glad at your unexpected return, as it is a good sign of your health. I start this very moment, 9.15 o'clock, for Babelsberg, where I must be to-morrow for a farewell *diné* given by my brother Carl at 3 o'clock. I will, however, come here by the 12 o'clock train, to speak to you about 1 o'clock in *your house*, as I must steam back at 2 o'clock.

WILHELM.

May 21, '70.

170

DONCHERY, September 2, '70.

After I came here yesterday evening, by your Royal Majesty's command, to take part in the negotiations on the capitulation, these were interrupted until 1 o'clock in the night, by time for consideration, which General Wimpffen solicited, being granted, after General von Moltke had definitely stated that no other terms will be granted than the laying down of arms, and that the bombardment would recommence at 9 o'clock in the morning if the capitulation were not concluded by that time. At about 6 o'clock this morning General Reille was announced, who informed me that the Emperor wished to see me, and was already on his way here from Sedan. The General returned at once to report to his Majesty that I was following, and shortly afterwards I met the Emperor near Fresnois, about half way between this place and Sedan. His Majesty was driving in an open carriage with three officers of high rank, and was escorted by three others on horseback. Of these officers I knew personally Generals Castelnau, Reille, Moskowa, who seemed to be wounded in the foot, and Vau-  
bert. As soon as I reached the carriage I dismounted, walked to the Emperor's side at the carriage door, and asked for his Majesty's orders. The Emperor at first expressed the wish to see your Imperial Majesty, evidently

in the belief that your Majesty was also at Donchery. When I replied that at present your Majesty's headquarters were at Vendresse, 13 miles away, the Emperor enquired whether your Majesty had decided where he should go, and what my opinion on the subject was. I replied that, as it was quite dark when I arrived here, I knew nothing of the district, and offered to place at his disposal at once the house in which I was staying at Donchery. The Emperor accepted this offer, and drove off at a walking pace in the direction of Donchery; about a hundred yards from the Maas bridge, which leads into the town, he stopped in front of a lonely, workman's cottage, and asked me if he could not stay there. I had the house examined by Councillor of Legation Count Bismarck-Bohlen, who in the meantime had followed me; when it was reported that the interior arrangements were very poor and inadequate, but that there were no wounded men in the house, the Emperor alighted, and invited me to accompany him inside. Here, in a very small room containing a table and two chairs, I had about an hour's conversation with the Emperor. His Majesty emphasised especially the wish to obtain more favourable conditions of capitulation for the army. I declined from the outset to treat this question with his Majesty, as this was a purely military question, to be settled between General von Moltke and General von Wimpffen. On the other hand, I asked if his Majesty were inclined to peace negotiations. The Emperor replied that, as a prisoner, he was not now in a position to do so, and to my further enquiry by whom, in his opinion, the executive power was at present represented in France, his Majesty referred me to the Government in Paris. When this point, which was indistinct in the Emperor's letter to your Majesty yesterday, was cleared up, I recognised, and did not conceal the fact from the Emperor, that the situation to-day, as yesterday, was still a purely military one, and emphasised the necessity arising from it



for us to obtain by the capitulation of Sedan above all things a material pledge for the security of the military results we had attained. I had already weighed from all sides with General von Moltke yesterday evening, the question whether it would be possible, without detriment to the German interests, to offer to the military feelings of honour of an army which had fought well more favourable terms than those already laid down. After due and careful consideration we both came to the conclusion that this could not be done. When, therefore, General von Moltke, who in the meantime had arrived from the town, went to your Majesty to submit the Emperor's wishes, he did not do so, as your Majesty is well aware, with the intention of advocating them.

The Emperor then went out into the open air, and invited me to sit beside him just outside the door of the cottage. His Majesty asked whether it would not be practicable to allow the French army to cross into Belgium, to be disarmed and detained there. I had discussed also this eventuality with General v. Moltke on the previous evening, and adduced the motive already given for not entering into the question of this course of procedure. With respect to the political situation, I myself took no initiative, and the Emperor went no further than to deplore the ill-fortune of the war, stating that he himself had not wished for war, but was driven into it by the pressure of public opinion in France. I did not regard it as my office to point out at that moment that what the Emperor characterised as public opinion was only the artificial product of certain ambitious coteries of the French press, with a very narrow political horizon. I merely replied that nobody in Germany wished for the war, especially not your Majesty, and that no German Government would have considered the Spanish question of so much interest as to be worth a war. I continued that your Majesty's attitude towards the Spanish succes-

sion question was finally determined by the misgiving whether it was right, for personal and dynastic considerations, to mar the endeavour of the Spanish nation to re-establish, by this selection of a King, their internal organisation on a permanent basis; that your Majesty, in view of the good relations existing for so many years between the Princes of the Hohenzollern House and the Emperor, had never entertained any doubt but that the Hereditary Prince would succeed in arriving at a satisfactory understanding with his Majesty the Emperor respecting the acceptance of the Spanish election, that, however, your Majesty had regarded this, not as a German or a Prussian, but as a Spanish affair.

In the meantime, between 9 and 10 o'clock, enquiries in the town, and especially *reconnaissances* on the part of the officers of the general staff had revealed the fact that the castle of Bellevue, near Fresnois, was suited for the accommodation of the Emperor, and was not yet occupied by the wounded. I reported this to his Majesty by designating Fresnois as the place I should propose to your Majesty for the meeting, and therefore referred it to the Emperor whether his Majesty would proceed there at once, as a longer stay in the little workman's cottage would be uncomfortable, and the Emperor would perhaps need some rest. His Majesty readily assented, and I accompanied the Emperor, who was preceded by an escort of honour from your Majesty's Own Cuirassier Regiment, to the Castle of Bellevue, where in the meantime the rest of the Emperor's suite and his carriages, whose coming had, it appears, been considered doubtful, had arrived from Sedan. General Wimpffen had also arrived, and with him, in anticipation of the return of General von Moltke, the discussion of the capitulation negotiations, which were broken off yesterday, was resumed by General v. Podbielski in the presence of Lieut. Col. von Verdy and the chief of General v. Wimpf-

fen's staff, these two officers acting as secretaries. I took part only in the commencement of the same by setting forth the political and judicial situation in accordance with the information furnished me by the Emperor himself, as it was thereupon reported to me by Major Count von Nostitz, by direction of General von Moltke, that your Majesty wished to see the Emperor only after the capitulation of the army had been concluded—on the receipt of which announcement the hope cherished by the opposite party of securing other terms than those decided on was given up. I then rode off in the direction of Chehery with the intention of reporting the situation to your Majesty, met General v. Moltke on the way, bringing the text of the capitulation approved by your Majesty, and this, when we arrived with it at Fresnois, was accepted and signed without opposition. The demeanor of General v. Wimpffen, as also that of the other French generals, during the previous night was very dignified, and this brave officer could not forbear expressing to me how deeply he was pained that he should have been called upon, forty-eight hours after his arrival from Africa, and half a day after he had assumed command, to set his name to a capitulation so fatal to the French arms, that, however, lack of provisions and ammunition, and the absolute impossibility of any further defence imposed upon him, as a general, the duty of suppressing his personal feelings, as further bloodshed could in no way alter the situation. The permission for the officers to be released on parole was received with great thankfulness, as an expression of your Majesty's intention not to hurt the feelings of an army, which had fought bravely, beyond the point demanded by the necessity of our political interests. General v. Wimpffen also subsequently gave expression to this feeling in a letter in which he thanks General v. Moltke for the consideration he showed in conducting the negotiations.

V. BISMARCK.

## 171

(On the bestowal of the Iron Cross, 1st Class, which was enclosed.)

In grateful acknowledgment of December 18, 1870,\* on  
December 24, 1870.

WILHELM.

VERSAILLES.

## 172

VERSAILLES, *December 25, '70.*

Will your Majesty be pleased to receive my most respectful thanks for the gracious distinction your Majesty has been pleased to bestow on me in commemoration of this Christmas festival, which is historically so very notable. Your Majesty has bestowed on me two distinctions in one by the autograph inscription on the same, which invests this mark of favour with an especially high value. Unfortunately I am not well enough to go out, I hope, however, soon to be able to place at your Majesty's feet the verbal expression of my most humble thanks.

V. BISMARCK.

## 173

*'New Year's Day, '71.*

As, unfortunately, I cannot see you to-day, I send you herewith my wishes for the New Year. The object of these is the well-being of you and yours, and they are coupled with the feeling of thankfulness that I must express to you in such ample measure for your great merits at this great time! May God vouchsafe us in this year the honourable peace which shall crown the great sacrifices of the glorious army!

Your

grateful King

WILHELM.

\* On December 18, 1870, King William received the deputation of the North-German Reichstag which prayed him to accept the title of Emperor.

174

VERSAILLES, *February 27, '71.*

I have been unable to come to you yesterday and to-day, so I take up my pen to congratulate you on the preliminaries to the peace which I again owe to your circumspection, resoluteness, and perseverance! Everybody except France is thanking you, but I most of all, and my thanks I herewith express to you in highest appreciation for this difficult work! If Bordeaux \* listens to reason, we shall crown what has indeed been a bloody, but a glorious and honourable, work which Providence set us to achieve; I thank Providence for granting me such an adviser and such an army!

Your

most grateful King

WILHELM.

175

BERLIN, *March 21, '71.*

With to-day's opening of the first German Reichstag after the re-establishment of a German Empire, the first public activity of the same begins. Prussia's history and destiny have for a long time pointed to an event which is now accomplished by its being summoned to the head of the newly-founded Empire. Prussia owes this less to her extent of territory and her power, though both have equally increased, than to her intellectual development and the organisation of her army. The brilliant position now occupied by my country has been attained through an unexpectedly rapid sequence of great events during the past six years. The work to which I called you ten years ago falls within this time. How you have justified the confidence with which I then summoned you, lies open to the world.

\* The French National Assembly was sitting at Bordeaux.



It is to your counsel, your circumspection, your unwearied activity that Prussia and Germany owe the world-historical occurrence which is embodied in my capital to-day.

Although the reward for such deeds is felt within you, I am nevertheless urged and bound to express to you publicly and permanently the thanks of the Fatherland and mine. I elevate you, therefore, to the rank of a Prussian Prince (Fürst), which is to be inherited always by the eldest male member of your family.

May you see in this distinction the undying gratitude of

Your

Emperor and King

WILHELM.

176

BERLIN, April 13, '71.

When the City Council informed me a few weeks ago of the festivity which the city of Berlin intends to give to the Reichstag, Count Eulenburg, the Minister, was of opinion that I and the Queen, perhaps also the whole Royal family, would not wish to take part in it, as the announcement of the same contained only an indirect invitation. I now hear that Hedemann, owing to the illness of Chief Burgomaster Seydel, has had an audience of my son, and, as the city calculates with *certainly* on our appearance at the festivity, discussed the details with him. According to these we are to arrive an hour later than the time named on the invitation to the Reichstag, so that speeches, etc., attendant on the reception of the latter may be over before we arrive, and after half an hour on the upper floor we are to be conducted to a buffet.

My decision whether we go or not is now awaited.

Although such a festivity offers me and the Queen few *agrémens*, (it is, indeed, not intended for us) it is the first given by the city in its state apartments, and it appears al-

most impossible to ignore the indirect invitation. I wish, however, to hear your opinion as quickly as possible, as the festivity is fixed for the 17th. and the *city fathers* desire to be informed as soon as possible whether we shall appear.

WILHELM.

177

BERLIN, December 24, '71.

With to-day's festival we also approach the close of the year which, after two years' bloody but glorious fights, brought us peace. This eternally memorable portion of time signifies for Prussia a new, hardly anticipated period, as it now stands at the head of a new German Empire.

I do not need many words to recall to myself, and again bring before you what I, Prussia, and Germany owe to your unceasing efforts in this glorious time! The world appreciates your blessing-bringing labours for the reconstruction of the European, I may say the world, relations, and the world know that I hope I have been grateful.

I wish, however, to set up in your house and in your family a visible sign of this gratitude; I take the opportunity of to-day's festival to send you my bust in marble, as this material is *to some extent* able to carry to posterity my sentiments towards you.

May you *accept* the Christmas present with the feelings with which it is *given*!

Your grateful, faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

Imp. Rex.

178

BERLIN, March 2, '72.

We celebrate to-day the first anniversary of the glorious conclusion of peace, which was attained by bravery and

sacrifices of all kinds, but through your circumspection and energy led to results which had never been dreamed of! I repeat to you again to-day, with a grateful and affected heart, my acknowledgments and my thanks, to which I have given public expression in *iron* and in *noble metals*. One metal is still lacking, viz. bronze. I therefore place at your disposal to-day a token of remembrance in this metal, and in the form which you silenced a year ago. I have given instructions for several captured cannons, which you shall choose yourself, to be assigned to you, that you may plant them in your possessions as a permanent memorial of the great services you have rendered me and the Fatherland!

Your  
truly devoted and  
grateful  
WILHELM.

179

BERLIN, April 1, '72.

Receive my most cordial, most sincere wishes for to-day's festival, especially that you may retain your health, in order to be able still further to devote your services to the *full extent of your powers* to the Fatherland and to me!

Your  
grateful King  
WILHELM.

180

EMS, July 8, '72.

I expressed the hope to you yesterday that your health, which at present is not satisfactory, might soon be better; now that the urgent questions such as Jesuits' Law, French treaty concerning payment of the millions, Luxemburg's treaty, etc. are all settled, it appears to me that the moment

for us all to rest has arrived, which you especially should take advantage of to abandon yourself for some time to real rest from all business affairs. For your opinion that you could fit yourself for brain work by being much and long in the open air, and by taking as much exercise as possible in the same has, from what you told me, not held good *for any length of time*. I hear that you have sent for such business men as Bucher and others to Varzin, which I can understand when important questions had to be settled, and during the sittings of the Reichstag, but this is now closed, and the Landtag is adjourned. What I wish for you, viz. *real* rest from business, can be attained only if you cast on one side everything which necessitates mental activity and requires speedy decisions, as you did some years ago with such great success. Think what extremely important matters await us next winter, of which I will mention only the development of the ecclesiastical questions. For all these matters you must gather *fresh* strength and *much* strength. The Fatherland and I, therefore, demand imperatively of you that you shall *rest* while there is time; you must never forget what you are to us!

Your

faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

181

COBLENZ, July 26, '72.

You will celebrate, on the 28th., a delightful family festival \* which the Almighty in His mercy has accorded you. I, therefore, may and can not remain behind with my sympathy on this occasion, so will you, and the Princess, your wife, accept my most cordial and warmest congratulations on this great occasion. That both of you always gave the first place, among the blessings showered on you by Provi-

\* Silver wedding.

dence, to domestic happiness, is something for which your prayers of thanksgiving should ascend to heaven. Our and my prayers of thanksgiving, however, go further, as they include thanks to God for having placed you at my side at a decisive moment, and thus opened up a career for my Government far exceeding thought and comprehension. You also will send up your feelings of thankfulness that God graciously permitted you to accomplish such great things. Both in and after all your labours you always found comfort and peace in your home, and that gives you strength in your difficult vocation. To preserve and strengthen you for this is my constant solicitude, and I am glad to learn from your letter through Count Lehndorff and also from the latter himself that you will now think more of *yourself* than of the documents.

In remembrance of your silver wedding a vase will be handed to you which represents a grateful Borussia and which, fragile though the material of which it is composed may be, shall one day express even in every fragment what Prussia owes to you in its elevation to the height on which it now stands.

Your  
truly devoted  
grateful King  
WILHELM.

182

VARZIN, *August 1, '72.*

YOUR MAJESTY

greatly gladdened my wife and me by graciously evincing sympathy in our family festival, and will, we trust, be graciously pleased to accept our respectful thanks.

Your Majesty justly emphasises happiness in the home as being among the chief blessings for which I have to



thank God, but part of the happiness in my house, for my wife as well as for myself, comes from the consciousness of your Majesty's satisfaction, and the exceedingly gracious and kindly words of appreciation which your Majesty's letter contains are more beneficial to afflicted nerves than is all medical assistance. In looking back over my life I have such inexhaustible cause to thank God for His unmerited mercy, that I often fear everything will not go so well with me until the end. I recognise it as an especially happy dispensation, that God has called me on earth to the service of a master whom I serve joyfully and with love, as the innate fidelity of the subject never has to fear, under your Majesty's leadership, coming into conflict with a warm feeling for the honour and the welfare of the Fatherland. May God further give me strength to carry out the will so to serve your Majesty that I obtain the sovereign satisfaction, of which such a gracious testimony lies before me to-day in the form of the autograph letter of the 26th. The vase, which arrived in good time, is a truly monumental expression of Royal favour, and at the same time so substantial that I may hope not the "fragments" but the whole will be evidence to my descendants of the gracious sympathy evinced by your Majesty on the occasion of our silver wedding.

The officers of the 54th. regiment showed a kindly spirit of comradeship by sending their band from Colberg. Otherwise, as is usually the case in the country, we were confined to our family circle; only Motley, the former American Ambassador in London, a friend of my early youth, happened to be here on a visit. Besides her Majesty the Queen, his Majesty the King of Bavaria, and their Royal Highnesses Prince Carl and Friedrich Carl, and his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, honoured me with telegraphic congratulations.

In health I am becoming slowly better; I have, it is true,

done no work whatever; but I hope to be able to report myself on duty in time for the Imperial visits.

V. BISMARCK.

183

GASTEIN, *August 6, '72.*

WORTH.

Receive my most hearty thanks for your kind answer to my letter on the silver festival, an answer which reflects so truly your faithful feelings to me and the Fatherland.

The Imperial meeting in Berlin in September will be an event of great political importance for us, and public opinion views the same just as favourably as you and I do. It is to be hoped your health will permit of your being in Berlin at that time. I shall not *bind* myself to anything!

From the commencement of the enclosure you will see that court-preacher Hoffmann introduced a very delicate question to me, and that I did not *forbid* him to make quite private enquiries in the matter. This question has been brought before me from many sides, but I always repelled it, as I could never take the initiative. Simson, however, desires the contrary; Delbrück, I see, is of my opinion. Hoffmann's proposal to arrange for the gift by the Empire through the Federal Council, on the initiative of Bavaria, is possible, and I await your opinion.

As I received Hoffman's letter just as I was leaving Berlin it got mixed up among a large number of other papers, and almost six weeks have passed by. I do not know whether H., who expected no answer from me if I did not issue a prohibition, has taken further steps, and especially whether he has informed you of his idea, so that I await your reply on the subject.

I continue to be very well. The tremendous heat at Ems,

Coblenz, and Wiesbaden was replaced at first by very cool days, which have now been followed, especially here, by a very agreeable temperature.

With best wishes, hoping that you also continue in good health, I remain

Your

faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

My kindest regards to the Princess.

184

VARZIN, *August 12, '72.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious autograph letter written on the anniversary of Wörth. I hope to be in Berlin at the beginning of September, although my capacity for work has not made such progress as I had expected and would wish. For this reason, but also politically, I am set at ease by your Majesty's resolve not to be "bound to anything" on the occasion of the Imperial meeting. I fear the officiousness of Prince Gortchakoff since I have read in the newspapers that he is bringing his two chief *faiseurs*, Jomini and Hamburger, with him.

Your Majesty has commanded my opinion on court-preacher Hoffmann's letter, which is most humbly returned herewith. I do not doubt that the idea expressed in it will sooner or later become practicable; but I question whether it is so to-day. I have received impressions from among the members of the Reichstag mentioned by court-preacher Hoffmann, and surprise at Hoffmann's disclosures predominated. The members believed that Hoffmann was sounding them with the knowledge and wish of your Majesty, and all, not Simson alone, retired behind the necessity of a Government proposal. It is, as a matter of fact, only a polite form of denial, for according to constitutional practice the suggestion

can very well come from the Reichstag, and considering its delicate nature ought to come only from there. This could be done by means of petitions, resolutions, etc., by which the initiative of the disbursement would still remain formally with the Governments. The pressure of the peoples' representatives for increase of salaries and an augmentation of the expenditure in special departments of the Ministries of Public Instruction, Justice, and Commerce furnishes numerous examples of this each year. The only form which a suggestion on the part of the Government can finally take is for the Imperial Chancellor to lay a proposal before the Reichstag in the name of the Federal Council, and with the express approval of your Majesty. Whether the first motion in the Federal Council is made by Prussia or by Bavaria has no influence on the final form assumed by the proposition. But I would consider that the King of Bavaria is the last of your Majesty's confederates whom it is advisable to approach for his good services in this matter. King Ludwig's domestic affairs are in such disorder, that for years his obligations have been met only with great difficulty. It was hoped that the French contribution and the establishment of the German Empire would offer means and ways for an arrangement being arrived at. This hope was, however, not realised. Even an abler negotiator than court-preacher Hoffmann would not at the present moment render the idea acceptable in Munich that Bavaria, being itself in great difficulties, should take the initiative in the matter of the Imperial gift, which, moreover, is unpopular with the majority of the Bavarians.

I dare not express an opinion on the matter when the Reichstag is not sitting; one can never infer from the views expressed by a deputy in a *tête-à-tête* that he will defend the same opinion in the Reichstag. An approximate judgment as to how a question will be received in the Reichstag can be formed only when the parties are assembled.

Will your Majesty, for this reason, graciously permit me to postpone until then giving an opinion on the feasibility of the matter.

I am not surprised that court-preacher Hoffmann already gives a decided opinion on the question, for I have been acquainted for years with the sanguine assurance with which this clerical gentleman busies himself with politics, a subject on which he is ignorant. His absolute lack of the discreet reserve which delicate affairs demand leads me to fear that he will render the present matter more difficult by his interference, and, as he seems to have done in Berlin last winter, will make an improper use of your Majesty's name. I can, therefore, only most respectfully advise your Majesty most graciously to forbid the chief court-preacher taking any steps whatever in this matter, especially on the dangerous ground of Munich.

I am somewhat concerned in my solicitude about the question of rank between their Majesties of Russia and Austria. Count Stillfried seems, to my astonishment, to believe that a general precedence of one Imperial court or house over another is still in some way recognised by the latter. That was never undisputed even in the last century, and was abandoned absolutely in 1814-15, and in 1818 at Aix. As far as rank itself is concerned neither of the two Emperors gives the other the *pas*. The only expedients which offer themselves are, in the first place, the length of the reign, then perhaps, after previous agreement, the age of the two monarchs, and at Congresses the alphabet. This difficult question must, in my most humble opinion, be arranged *à l'aimable* through the intermediary of your Majesty's Ambassadors in St. Petersburg and Vienna, before the meeting of their Majesties takes place.

V. BISMARCK.



185

BERLIN, *November 9, '72.*

We are in the midst of a parliamentary crisis which is the more difficult for me as you are not here with us, and I feel the want of your daily, I may say hourly, advice and the necessary discussion! Correspondence and memoranda do not go far towards filling this void, as sentence for sentence must be discussed in order first to come to an agreement on the principles, and then on the manner in which they are to be applied! The Upper House, to which I owe so very much for its loyal, staunch, and consistent attitude to the Crown during the stormy years of 1861-66, has now passed sentence on itself by its oppositional attitude, its rancorous demeanor towards the Crown! Can and may such an attitude be regarded indulgently? I myself, hard as it is for me to do so, must answer this question in the negative! What is to be done next? This question is still harder to answer. The building up of the internal political conditions of the country requires the progressive regulation of the foundations, and that is the regulation of the arrangement of the districts; this must be carried out, the welfare of the country and the dignity of the Crown demand it. Is this possible in the present parliamentary situation without bringing great influence to bear on the Upper House? No! It is terribly difficult for me to utter this No; the Upper House was created by the King my brother, and, although there was much I wished otherwise from the beginning, I greeted its composition with gladness, as I considered that its leading principle, that on which the English House of Lords is based, is the only right one. At the same time I do not overlook the different conditions of society in the two countries. The defect of this creation is the difficulty of a remedy when it opposes the Government, the only one being to create a sufficient number of new peers when all compromises have

failed, or to remodel its constitution. This is the dilemma in which we find ourselves! But the solution of the same demands a mature, thorough examination, deliberation etc., before such a decisive step is taken which assures the very existence of the state for a long future—or convulses it!! I am not able to make short work of this examination, deliberation, etc. Your personal presence is indispensably necessary for this, as it was generally recognised in yesterday's Council. But the re-opening of the Landtag is near at hand. Some decision must be come to. As, therefore, it was *impossible* for me to decide on announcing, at the opening on the 12th., that a remodelling of the Upper House was contemplated—for *I* have not yet absolutely made up *my mind*,—the following has been decided upon: 1. that the attempt has been made to include in the District Regulation, which is again to be introduced, all that is *acceptable* to both Houses, in the hopes that the House of Deputies will accept it in that form, *whereupon* 2. the creation of new peers is to be proceeded with, so as to ensure its acceptance in the Upper House, and 3. while these proceedings are going on in both Houses the project for re-modelling the Upper House shall be prepared. This project can and may, however, not be discussed before your return to Berlin.

I regret that matters have not transpired in accordance with your proposals to me in your letter and memorandum, and with your communication to the Ministry of State. The unanimity of the latter in yesterday's Council and my own view as here set forth, that *in no case* can I permit *over-haste* in this most important matter, and that nothing shall be done without your presence, induced me to join this unanimity.

May God, who has hitherto so visibly succoured us with His mercy, continue to accord us His help! Hoping to see you again soon in good health! Your faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

186

VARZIN, *November 13, '72.*

Most gracious King and master,

I am very disappointed that I cannot reply to your Majesty's gracious letter of the 9th. by coming at once to Berlin to place myself at your Majesty's disposal in the pending crisis, especially as I thought at the end of last month that I should soon be sufficiently recovered. Since my return from Berlin I found that I was constantly gaining strength, and for this reason, as well as from the interest I take in affairs, allowed myself to be led, contrary to the urgent warnings of my doctor, to yield to Count Eulenburg's repeated appeals, and sought by memorials to your Majesty and by correspondence with the Ministers and the members of the Upper House to exert an influence on the course of business. It is a very risky thing to do this in such a manner and from a distance, as I miss the discussions which throw so much light on the matter, I am ignorant of the counter-arguments, and have not sufficient assistance. I hoped, however, that it would be only a few days ere matters got into smoother water. This attempt has, however, only too quickly convinced me that my doctor was perfectly right, and that my supply of newly-gathered strength is but scanty. This discourages me very much, for my influence on business will have been rather a disturbing one, and the few days of work and excitement with the consequent nervous irritation have sufficed again to show me how exhausted my brain-power has become. I fear that I am more used up than I care to confess, and this anxiety, as well as the feeling of shame that at such an important time I am not at my post and at your Majesty's service, depresses me exceedingly, although I say to myself that I must submit in humility to the will of God, who does not need my assistance and who places limits to my powers. My disquietude finds its counterpoise

in the confidence expressed by your Majesty at the end of your letter, and which I share from my heart, that God, who has hitherto blessed your Majesty's Government will, in His mercy, continue to grant His help. The way sanctioned by your Majesty in the Council will be just as likely to lead to the goal as the way proposed by me, if only there is no breach with the present House of Deputies in the meantime, and if my colleagues continue to be unanimous. They will remain so for your Majesty's sake, although many signs of divergence have lately become evident. I fear that my correspondence with individual Ministers, who addressed questions to me, will incidentally have increased the elements of discord, and that I shall have been the cause of misunderstandings, owing to the fact that the contents of my letters would be known *in their entirety* only to those to whom they were addressed. I have, therefore, requested Roon to consult me only when your Majesty specially commands it, and have informed him that I will not again correspond with individual colleagues.

In this way, my being called upon, so long as God does not help me to greater strength, will rest only in your Majesty's gracious, indulgent hands. My hope and my prayer to God is that it may be soon again granted to me to fulfil my duty under your Majesty's eye, and to regain the peace of mind which work gives.

V. BISMARCK.

187

VARZIN, December 5, '72.

While most respectfully handing the enclosure to your Majesty, and begging for gracious permission to be allowed to supplement the same by means of a verbal report within at least a fortnight, I beg most humbly to add a remark which I cannot give to another hand to write.

Your Majesty will most graciously remember that the ease

with which Count Arnim permits his personal impressions to dominate his political judgment was an essential consideration with your Majesty against appointing him Ambassador in Paris. I certainly did not anticipate that also in Paris his political judgment would be so prejudiced as his absolutely biassed and essentially contradictory statements show. I had hoped that he would feel the importance of the position, and the seriousness of the situation. I venture, for the present, only respectfully to beg your Majesty, on the grounds of the confidence most graciously placed in my judgment in these matters for so many long years past, not to attach to the reports of Count Arnim the importance which impartial and conscientious representation claim.

V. BISMARCK.

188

BERLIN, *December 21, '72.*

In accordance with your proposition in the report of the 20th. inst. I hereby release you from the Presidency of my Ministry of State. You will still report to me in matters affecting the Empire and foreign policy, and in case you are prevented from personally taking part in a sitting of the Ministry of State you are authorised to give your vote, in matters affecting the interests of the Empire, but on your responsibility, through Minister Delbrück, President of the Imperial Chancellor's Office. The Ministry of State will be presided over by the oldest Minister of State. I have informed the Ministry of State of this. WILHELM.

189

BERLIN, *December 24, '72.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully and heartily for the handsome and distinguishing present for Christmas Eve.\*

\* A copy in bronze of Rauch's monument to Frederick the Great.



My father joined the King's Own Carbineers in 1783, and had the honour of being presented to Frederick the Great at the review as a Junker, on which occasion the great King was graciously pleased to hold up to him in a most graciously appreciative manner, as a pattern, the example of his grandfather, Major von Bismarck, who fell at Czaslau.

These, and many other vivid recollections narrated by my father of the great time recalled to my mind by the work of art now before me, and to which I can add a well-preserved series of my grandfather's letters from the encampments during the Seven Years' War, form the permanent impressions of my childhood, and I have always regretted that it was not permitted to me, according to the wishes of my parents, to manifest at the front rather than behind the writing desk my attachment to the Royal House and my enthusiasm for the greatness and the glory of the Fatherland. Even to-day, after your Majesty has raised me to the highest honours which a statesman can attain, I cannot quite suppress the regret that I have not won similar promotion as a soldier. Will your Majesty forgive a man, who is accustomed on Christian festivals to reflect on his past, giving way on Christmas Eve to this expression of personal sentiments. I should perhaps have been useless as a general, but if I had followed my own inclination I would rather have won battles for your Majesty, like the generals who adorn the monument, than diplomatic campaigns. By God's will, and by your Majesty's favour, I have the prospect of being mentioned in writing and in bronze when posterity immortalises the memory of your Majesty's glorious reign. But my cordial devotion, which is not restricted to the fidelity every honorable nobleman owes to his sovereign, to your Majesty's person, the pain and the sorrow caused me by the knowledge that I cannot always serve your Majesty as I would wish to do, will find expression in no monument; and yet it is, finally, only this personal feeling which impels the servants to follow

their monarch, and soldiers their leader, in unquestioning devotion along ways such as have been trodden by God's decree by Frederick II and your Majesty. My powers for work are no longer equal to my will; but the will belongs to your Majesty until my last breath. V. BISMARCK.

190

BERLIN, *January 1, '73.*

You know with what a heavy heart I complied with your wish and released you from the Presidency of my Ministry of State. But I know what mental and bodily strain the ten years you have held this position have cost you, and will, therefore, no longer defer granting you relief.

Ten momentous years have passed since you obeyed my summons to take the head of the Prussian administration! Step by step, with counsel and with deeds, you have enabled me to develop Prussia's power and to lead Germany to unity. Your name is indelibly recorded in the history of Prussia and of Germany, and the highest acknowledgment has rightly been made to you from all sides. If I sanction your laying down the administration of Prussia, which you have conducted with such a sure hand, you will yet remain closely connected with it while carrying on the political tasks of Prussia in conjunction with those of the post of German Imperial Chancellor.

In bestowing on you the insignia with brilliants of my high Order of the Black Eagle, I desire to give you a renewed proof of my highest appreciation and undying gratitude!

May the disburdenment which I have granted you assure you the invigoration of your health, which you hope, and I wish for, so that you may be able long to render your tried services to the near and the wider Fatherland and to me.

Your truly devoted, grateful King

WILHELM.

191

BERLIN, April 2, '73.

It was only yesterday evening that it occurred to me, that although you had been with me I had not remembered your birthday. My cordial congratulations on the new period of life do not, therefore, arrive until *to-day* (and thus certainly are no *poisson d'Avril*)! Above all, may it bring you health, which, as well as I can see, has not suffered, at least in Berlin,—that you may long be enabled to manifest your great capacities to the welfare of the Fatherland.

Your faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

192

VAZZIN, April 14, '73.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I beg most respectfully to announce that I reserve discussion on Count Arnim's letter of the 8th. until the official documents bearing on the subject are accessible to me.

For the present I only most respectfully remark that Count Arnim has reported incompletely, as he suppresses my decisive telegram at the beginning of the negotiations, before the 5th, and then passes off on your Majesty his communication to Thiers as a complete communication of our draft convention in accordance with this telegram. In the alternative suggested by Count Arnim that Thiers or he must have said what is not true, the greater measure of trustworthiness lies, I fear, with Thiers, and with the official telegram, with which your Majesty is acquainted, of the President to Count St. Vallier.\* Your Majesty will graciously remember that, on the appointment of Count Arnim to his present post, I stated in a letter most respectfully addressed to your Majesty from here that only the

\* General Commissioner with the German army of occupation.

fullest reliance on your Majesty's confidence in me could give me courage to attempt political work with an Ambassador of such an uncertain and untrustworthy character, and perhaps to renew the conflicts which for years I had to maintain with Count Goltz. These conflicts began last autumn, when Count Arnim advocated to your Majesty a policy with regard to Thiers which was exactly opposed to mine, and which I attacked from here in direct reports to your Majesty, and in letters; and the result has, I believe, proved me to be in the right. It is, however, never possible in politics to give mathematical proofs. Confidence in the judgment of one or other of your Majesty's advisers or correspondence is finally determinative. It is easy to give to a report like that of Count Arnim's of the 8th. inst., which comprises the daily changing situation of the three previous weeks, a colouring which appears true without being so.

The documents which I have instructed the Foreign Office to forward to-day present a different picture. Until the contents of the same are compiled afresh I beg only to make a most respectful observation on the formal procedure of the Ambassador. Discipline is certainly quite as indispensable in the diplomatic as in the military service, only it is far more difficult to maintain, and it is lost as soon as its forms are allowed to drop. For this reason I most humbly beg your Majesty to be gracious enough to direct the Imperial Ambassador to hand in his official complaint against his superior through the latter to your Majesty, so that I may report the same to your Majesty in due course of service. If this is not done, I occupy with my inferior the position of two contending parties. As my powers are, it would not be possible for me, side by side with the fights in the Landtag and the Reichstag, in the Ministry, and with foreign Cabinets, against social influences and against the influence of the press, also to fight, through the medium of written discussion, for the official authority which I need for the

conduct of affairs. Gladly as I devote to your Majesty's service also what remains of my powers, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that this will very soon be consumed if I suffer under the painful feeling that I must strive with a man like Count Arnim for your Majesty's confidence, after I have possessed the same in undiminished measure for so many years, and never to my knowledge have betrayed it. I have for years never concealed from your Majesty my un-presuming opinion on the personality of Count Arnim. I had hoped that the high position in Paris, a position which is of such importance for the Fatherland, would perhaps have raised him above petty intrigues, otherwise I should have been obliged, after the Rome experience, to beg your Majesty more urgently not to confide the post to him, notwithstanding all his qualifications. I, and not I alone, suspect that when occasion offers he subordinates business to his personal interests. Such things cannot be proved, but it is difficult with such a suspicion in one's heart to remain responsible for the manner in which this high official carries out his instructions.

I have taken the liberty of communicating my suspicion to your Majesty, and your Majesty knows how slight is my confidence in the objectiveness of his reports; in order to spare your Majesty annoyance I have avoided giving official expression to my official conscientious doubts. Count Arnim's step, to which he was encouraged from Berlin, and which was expected there last week, leaves me no choice. Your Majesty will most graciously remember that I mentioned the attempt to lessen the dangers resulting in Paris from Count Arnim's character by removing him to London, but that when the matter was first broached there the strongest protests were made on account of Arnim's inclination for intrigue and for untruthfulness; "no word he uttered would be believed." Against the accusation of a man of this reputation I would only now most respectfully beg



that your Majesty may be graciously pleased to direct him to tender his official grievance through official channels.

V. BISMARCK.

193

BERLIN, *September 4, '73.*

With my thanks for *your* second thanks for the recognition bestowed on you by me at the conclusion of our Memorial Celebration\* I send you your Prince's patent, which I have always intended to hand you myself, but unfortunately forgot. It will be one more enduring sign for your family that an endeavour to reward your services to the Fatherland was made by

Your  
faithfully devoted  
and grateful  
King  
WILHELM.

(Enclosure.)

We, Wilhelm, by the grace of God German Emperor, King of Prussia, etc. etc., herein set forth for Us, Our heirs and successors to the Crown, that We have resolved to raise to the Chancellor of the German Empire, President of Our Ministry of State,

Lieutenant-General

Leopold Eduard Otto

Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen

in consideration, that the same, by his services rendered to Us and Our Royal House, Our Monarchy and the whole

\* The unveiling of the monument to Victory in Berlin on September 2nd; on this occasion the Emperor bestowed on Prince Bismarck the cross and star in brilliants of a Grand Commander of the Hohenzollern House Order.

German Fatherland in faithful attachment and complete devotion, with unremitting zeal and statesmanly wisdom under God's gracious protection, not only enhanced the honour, power, and importance of Our Royal House and of Prussia with eminent success, but also rendered imperishable services towards the re-establishment of a German Empire, uniting the Princes and races of peoples of the common Fatherland, which was won in glorious fight by the eternally memorable victories of the entire German nation, in testimony of Our Royal favour and benevolence a monument of honours which shall serve as an enduring ornament to him and his, as a perpetual distinction and as a permanent remembrance of what he has done and achieved for Us, Our Royal House, and the common Fatherland, and have, therefore, on March 21 of the year 1871, elevated him, with the name of

Fürst von Bismarck,

to the rank of hereditary Fürst of Our Monarchy.

In confirming this herewith, We advance and raise Leopold Eduard Otto, Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen, to the rank of Fürst in such a manner that this princely dignity shall pass to the successor in the possession of the entail, as approved and confirmed by Us in the deed of February 19th. of this year, of the estate of Schwarzenbeck in Our Duchy of Lauenburg, in the order given in the accompanying document, and so on to everyone attaining the succession, especially also through females descending from one of the sons possessing the estate of Schwarzenbeck, on his assuming the armorial bearings and the name of a

Fürst von Bismarck,

should he not already bear this name.

We bestow on the present Fürst von Bismarck, as also on his successors in the princely dignity, with all honours,

dignities, rights, and privileges appertaining to such princely persons, the title of *Serene Highness* (*Durchlaucht*).

Done and given at Berlin, April 23, 1873, in the 13th. year of Our reign.

WILHELM.

V. SCHLEINITZ.

COUNT ZU EULENBURG.

# 194

BERLIN, September 19, '73.

The newspapers speak with such certainty of your coming here that I am no longer sure whether, after what we arranged, this is only a mask or you have changed your mind. Should the former be the case I set forth the following.

1. If V. E.\* should speak of a possible alliance against France I would entrench myself behind my principle only to concluded alliances *ad hoc*.

2. As regards ecclesiastical matters, I am so firmly of opinion that what has been commenced must be proceeded with that I am armed, and would hardly meet with opposition from him, although he is in a dilemma!

3. It is hardly probable that he will touch the La Marmora disclosures, since his Ministry has offered excuses for them; in any case my position is to treat the matter as *histoire ancienne*.

Are you agreed? or have you other points of view to touch? So that we remain *en harmonie*.

Yours

WILHELM.

# 195

VARZIN, September 20, '73.

Your Majesty's gracious letter of yesterday has reached me.

My intention to avoid the Italian Royal visit pricked my conscience as being illoyal when I read that the Foreign and

\* King Victor Emanuel.

the Prime Ministers are accompanying the King. I fear that all the hostile papers will misrepresent and use to their advantage the fact that the Italian Ministers come to Berlin and find there neither the Chancellor nor the Prussian Minister-President; erroneous and unwished-for conclusions will be drawn from it. As a punishment for my intended diplomatic sin I have now, however, returned here really very much out of health from my brother's silver wedding, where I had to renew a large number of former acquaintanceships. I hope to have sufficiently overcome the painful rheumatism to be able to travel on Monday or Tuesday, in order to register my political good will, although I remain a useless guest.

I had already discussed yesterday the most important of the three points raised in your Majesty's gracious letter, the treatment of any possible alliance proposals, in a memorandum which I intended to do myself the honour of sending to your Majesty, and which I now respectfully enclose. In the ecclesiastical questions it is a matter of course that your Majesty, as a protestant Christian, will take a firmer stand against papal claims for temporal influence and for the suppression of the Gospel than a Catholic ruler, and in respect of this the embarrassment will be on the side of the latter. So far as I am acquainted with them, La Mormora's disclosures contain no offensive insinuations against your Majesty; I certainly only know what the *Spener Zeitung* has published on the subject, and according to which my personal policy is placed in a most unfavourable light; the impression of your Majesty's *German* policy in preserving the inviolability of German territory comes into full view through this testimony from a hostile pen. The situation at that time is thus rightly defined, for I could meet the Napoleonic policy only by always giving Benedetti and the Italians, who kept nothing secret from Napoleon, to understand that I was quite inclined to stray from the path of

virtue, but my most gracious master was not, and that I must have time to persuade your Majesty. Your Majesty knows that I never attempted to do this, but the French belief that I was working at it was very useful to us; *à corsaire corsaire et demi* is an old French proverb, and *de bonne guerre* in politics. King Victor Emanuel will hardly wish to speak of these matters except in exculpation.

In the hope of being permitted to present myself to your Majesty in a few days' time, I cannot close this letter without laying at your Majesty's feet my most respectful thanks for graciously sending me the brilliantly executed Prince's patent. May God grant that the high distinctions and manifold proofs of favour so graciously bestowed on me by your Majesty may keep alive in the hearts of my descendants always the same feelings of respectful love for and personal attachment to their Imperial and Royal House with which, as your Majesty's born Brandenburg liegeman, I shall always be faithful, devoted, and ready with my service.

V. BISMARCK.

196

BERLIN, November 9, '73.

Now that you have, at my wish, expressed your willingness again to assume the Presidency of my Ministry of State, from which at his request I have released Field-Marshal von Roon, I once more hereby appoint you President and, in accordance with your proposal, Finance Minister Camphausen to be Vice-President of my Ministry of State. I am informing the latter of this by special *ordre*. WILHELM.

197

GASTEIN, July 7, '74.

At last I am able myself to add these lines to the telegram of sympathy from Munich.\* Many words are *not* needed

\* This telegram, dated July 13, 1874, has been lost, the following is the only portion of its contents which have been published: "May you



*between us* to describe the feelings which convulsed me when, during the royal *diné* at Munich, Werthern handed me the telegram containing the terrible news \*, but which also at the same time showed the dispensation of Providence which again graciously averted from you the designs of wicked men!! No person in the whole wide world can more gratefully appreciate and glorify this favour than I! I am no sooner set at rest by your more confirmed health when this outrage must come to make it clear to me—and to everybody—how much hangs on *your* life! But this feeling has been manifested in such an unequivocal manner that it must afford you indescribable satisfaction! And if we must regret to the depth of our hearts the severe shock which you and yours have sustained, the Divine dispensation should also be recognised, what you are to the nearer and wider Fatherland, indeed to the world, and what is still required and expected of you! Every Christian knows that our life is in God's hands, but we two have seen this manifested, for the murderer's hand that was raised against us was turned aside from us *only † from up above!*

So, trusting in God we will confidently pursue our way through life, and act and work as long as it pleases Him!

Hoping that your wound will heal quickly, and your course of treatment work you no harm, I am as ever, and more than ever,

Your  
grateful King  
and friend  
WILHELM.

find consolation and satisfaction in looking back over a past which has made knaves your enemies and men your friends."

\* The Kissingen outrage on July 13, 1874.

† Doubly underlined in the original.

198

KISSINGEN, *July 27, '74.*

YOUR MAJESTY

will, I venture to trust, most graciously pardon me for having reserved my most respectful thanks for the gracious letter of the 17th. until I can hold the pen myself; I am faring badly, but yet in so far well that I can myself write how much your Majesty's words have gladdened and buoyed me. On my appointment as a general your Majesty said a gracious word which my inmost feelings re-echoed, viz. that I had served your Majesty also as a soldier.\* As such I rejoice at the wound I have received in the service, and as such I strive to follow the illustrious example which your Majesty sets to your servants in the service of the Fatherland. Might I also succeed in bearing personal insults like that of the 13th. with the serenity shown by your Majesty in similar cases, for anger and hatred are bad counsellors in politics, and I ask God for humility and the spirit of forgiveness. I hope that time and the treatment will also remove the bitterness which should not make its voice heard in the conduct of public business.

I must after all have recourse to another hand to write more.

V. BISMARCK.

199

('Telegram.

*November 8, '74.*

To-morrow Count Redern † celebrates his 50 years' jubilee. He calculates on the title of Fürst. It seems to me my *portrait en pied* gives most fitting expression to his merits. Please let me know your opinion.

WILHELM.

\* See letter of September 20, 1866, above.

† Count Wilhelm von Redern, Lord High Chamberlain.

200

(Telegram.)\*

November 8, '74.

For his life absolutely no objections; should it be made hereditary I would stipulate for grant of an annuity of 150,000 thalers (about £22,500.) Choice between this and portrait, matter for his Majesty's personal feeling.

V. BISMARCK.

201

FRIEDRICHSRUH, November 8, '74.

I most respectfully beg your Majesty's pardon for having neglected to bring my cypher with me. I have telegraphed my opinion *en clair* to Bülow, though, as I believe, unintelligibly to the telegraphist.

In my most humble opinion, there are no objections to be raised against your Majesty bestowing on a faithful servant of your Majesty's person, after fifty years' service, the high distinction in question, as his high rank permits him to bear this title without prejudice to the latter, and, as there are no natural descendants, the same would become extinct on the decease of the Lord High Chamberlain. Should it be made hereditary to the nephews, the question is removed to a fresh field; but even then I should not like to give it an unqualified denial. In that case it becomes more a question of means. If the fortune which Count Redern is willing to settle in entail is of princely magnitude, I know of no reason why your Majesty should not manifest your favour towards a native nobleman of good family in the same manner as it has already been manifested towards Carolath, Pückler, Putbus, Sulkowski and others, having regard to their fortune. I should demand, however, as sufficient to support an elevation which is made chiefly on that account,

\* This telegram was addressed to Minister von Bülow, but was intended for the Emperor.

that an annual income of at least 150,000 Thalers be assured by entail. It is not improbable that this is already the case. A new Fürst, like Blücher or Hardenberg, may exist on less, as the motives for the creation are different, and generally known. Otherwise the head of a princely house is not conveniently situated, according to the present manner of living, with less than 100,000 Thalers (about £15,000.) a year; a Count, however, would be *very* rich with this income.

I would therefore leave it in your Majesty's hands, should your Majesty feel desirous of conferring a favour (in a case where the honour of the *portrait en pied* otherwise amply suffices) to raise the jubilee celebrator and his *descendants* to the rank of Fürst, and to permit him to supply the want of the latter by adoption, if he fulfils the above-mentioned financial conditions. I hope to be able to report myself in Berlin on the evening of the day after to-morrow.

V. BISMARCK.

202

(Telegram.)

November 9, '74.

In referring to feelings, only meant most humbly to suggest that jubilee celebrator had absolutely no grounds for dissatisfaction whichever of the two your Majesty might choose.

V. BISMARCK.

203

December 11, '74.

The War Minister has just informed me that the votes \* which had been objected to were accepted in the Reichstag to-day, and I thank you heartily for your efforts towards the attainment of this end.

Your

WILHELM.

\* In connection with an increase of the pay of privates in the Prussian army.

204

B., December 29, '74.

When the Minister \* thanked me a few days ago for his decoration, I remarked to him that it seemed to me absolutely necessary to introduce into the bills concerning civil marriage, which are now to be laid before the Reichstag, regulations which are wanting in the Prussian laws, and the lack of which has had the most unfortunate consequences, especially in that the idea already largely prevails that it is no longer necessary to have children christened or to be married at church. Minister Falk admitted this and also the necessity of regulations, although he was of opinion that such were only individual cases, to which I rejoined that the bill was introduced only three months ago and that it would soon be seen that this lax conception of sacred things would spread more and more; in short, it appears to me that Falk has not taken this affair, which I have very much at heart, particularly seriously. I would therefore most urgently beg you, before the new law for Germany is brought in, at all events to take care that the errors which have already crept in are entirely removed by the *wording of the bill* being made *very clear*, as I take it for granted that the new law will be valid for Prussia also.

Your

WILHELM.

205

B., January 16, '75.

Carl Meier, Baron von Rothschild, is suffering from Bandwurm † now that the Chapter of the *Orders* is approaching.

\* Falk, who was then Minister of State for Public Instruction and Ecclesiastical Matters.

† Literally tapeworm. See footnote to page 161.



I am not able to cure *this* disease, but a remedy might be found for Kreuz-Schmerzen.\* It might be advanced in his favour that during the war years he gave enormously much for benevolent purposes, for which *his wife*, who of course spent the money that her *husband* gave her, received the Cross for Merit, while he received *no* distinction.

If he is to be considered, only the Commander Cross with the six-pointed star of the Hohenzollern Order could be bestowed, as he already possesses the *star with brilliants* of the second class of the Red Eagle, so that the second Crown Order with the star would be too little.

I desire your view? If I decorate him *now* he will be done with for *a few* years, until the *Band*-disease *can* appear again.

Your

WILHELM.

I reserve the decoration of the Ministers until my birth-day, as I have always done.

## 206

B., February 5, '75.

I have just learned to my very great astonishment that Benedetti arrived here yesterday evening! and is said to be staying at the Hôtel Royal. Madai† will have enquiries made with a view to ascertaining the facts. If it is so, the *effronterie* would be great, and still greater if he should induce Gontaut to let him appear *at the ball to-day!* What is to be done? Shall the Foreign Office take the matter in hand, or the Master of the Ceremonies, Count Stillfried?

\* Literally lumbago.

The play on these words cannot be reproduced in English. The *Band* in the first word also means the ribbon of a high order which is worn across the breast. The word *Kreuz* in the second word also means the cross or star of a less important order. (Translator's note.)

† Police President in Berlin.

For in no case can I meet *that* man, and especially not *à l'improviste* at the Ambassador's!

But haste is necessary.

Your

WILHELM.

207

BERLIN, May 4, '75.

I take the liberty of most respectfully submitting the following to your Royal and Imperial Majesty.

When I returned to Berlin late in the autumn of last year I felt justified in hoping that after a long, serious illness, and after several months leave, during which I took the waters at Kissengen, my health was sufficiently restored to enable me to resume the conduct of the affairs of the offices committed to me by your Majesty. This hope has not been realised. A brief resumption of my duties sufficed to confine me again to my room for several months after Christmas, so that during the whole winter I have been able to fulfil but a small portion of my official duties. In the belief that I was sufficiently recovered, I yielded, in the beginning of April, to the impulse to render my duteous co-operation in your Majesty's service, but again after a few days had to return to my bed, which I have kept until now.

These experiences leave me in no doubt that I am incapable of performing further the work and duties inseparable from my office, and that after twenty-four years of active participation in the field of higher politics, more than half of which I passed in the extremely responsible position of your Majesty's chief political adviser, my powers are no longer adequate conscientiously to administer the high offices committed to me by your Majesty. It is the nature of these to demand complete renunciation of indulgence and rest, and it is also impossible for me, during the long periods of leave of absence which your Majesty has most graciously re-

peatedly granted me for my recovery, to remain unacquainted with and without participating in current business, so long as I have the prospect of having to take it up again. My interest in my official duties, so long as they are such for me, is too keen, and my responsibility, on account of their importance, is too great for me to relinquish them altogether for a period, as I should run the risk of finding the situation so changed on my return to duty that it would not be practicable for me to continue them.

The doctors have repeatedly told me that my bodily strength is no longer equal to the mode of life to which I have hitherto been accustomed, and that it would soon break down unless I made an alteration.

Although my greatest wish is to devote my services to your Majesty and the Fatherland, I feel to my deep regret that I am unable to do so, and am compelled most humbly to acquaint your Majesty with this. Even during the present winter I have at times cherished the hope that I might postpone my decision. As time goes on, however, the conviction becomes ever more firmly fixed in my mind, that I am no longer able to fulfil the duties of the offices entrusted to me by your Majesty to the extent that your Majesty has a right to expect, and which my sense of my duty and the responsibility devolving on me demand.

I most respectfully beg your Majesty most graciously to sanction my retirement from your Majesty's service on the legal pension.

Your Majesty will be assured that I remain attached to your Majesty in life-long gratitude for the favour and indulgence with which your Majesty has permitted me to serve the Royal House and the Fatherland in positions of honour and in memorable times, and for the high distinctions which your Majesty has bestowed on me in this service.

The favourable situation of home affairs, and of Germany's foreign relations, permits your Majesty to make, in

any seemingly suitable form at the present moment, a change which will shortly have to be made independently of every human will. As your Majesty has already been graciously pleased to permit me soon to take a long leave of absence for the sake of my health, the arrangements which would be made in the usual course during my temporary absence will suffice for the present, and your Majesty will not be pressed by circumstances to take definite steps before my leave expires. I would also most respectfully suggest that any negotiations concerning the future should not be made public too soon, so that the change may not erroneously be connected by public opinion with the Imperial visit,\* and other reasons imputed to it than the state of my health.

Your Majesty will, I venture to trust, be graciously convinced that the step I am now taking is a very difficult one for me; it is with great reluctance that I retire from your Majesty's near presence, and from the accustomed work. I have discussed the matter with myself for months, have arrived at this decision and then given it up again, but finally saw that my power to serve your Majesty is exhausted, and that I am no longer able to conduct the affairs of my office in a manner compatible with my sense of duty.

V. BISMARCK.

208

BERLIN, May 11, '75.

I have just received your letter of the 4th.! You will excuse me from attempting to describe the impression it has made on me! One thing I beg of you, as you yourself write saying I should keep the contents of your letter a secret so that they are not brought into connection with the presence of the Czar,—viz. that you will bind the transcriber of your letter to secrecy *on his oath*. Our experience in the matter

\*Of the Czar.

of divulged secrets has been so great, that it has taught us that nothing must be left undone to enable us to proceed in security, and this is all the more necessary as you give me a long time before you definitely proceed with the step you have taken!

Your deeply agitated  
W.

## 209

BERLIN, *June 4, '75.*

Although with reluctance, I will consent to your proposal of to-day's date, and will release you, during your leave of absence commencing to-day, from the regular business affairs of your positions. I have arranged for the conduct of business in accordance with your proposition; I nevertheless reserve to myself the right of asking directly for your opinion and your suggestions as heretofore in important questions. With the most hearty wish that this arrangement of business may re-establish your health, I am,

Your  
faithfully devoted friend  
WILHELM.\*

## 210

(Telegram.)

MAINAU, *July 13, '75, 10.20 A. M.*

To Prince Bismarck, Varzin.

I am mindful of to-day's anniversary,† in gratitude to God's ruling; how are you?

WILHELM.

\* The words "Your faithfully devoted friend Wilhelm" are in the Emperor's handwriting.

† Of Kullman's attempt on his life.



GASTEIN, August 6, '75.

But for your telegram on the ominous anniversary, I received the first sign of life from you only yesterday, when you expressed your agreement with the resolutions I have already arrived at in the Herzegovina episode, which it is to be hoped will die out, although there is enough inflammable material in those parts. As you have again taken notice of business matters,, I will no longer keep from you a letter I have received from Queen Victoria in answer to a letter of mine. I wrote her that after I had read Lord Derby's last statement in Parliament in June last, to the effect that the terrible war rumours were untrue, fully explained, and consigned to oblivion, I could not help regarding it as a proof that her Government had credited these rumours, and that her Majesty had therefore desired the English Cabinet to offer us her *bons offices* as intermediary. Heartily as I thanked the Queen for making this offer in such a friendly manner, I said that it had pained me to know that she had regarded me for a time as really the European disturber of the peace, as from her knowledge of my character she ought to have regarded this as impossible. For no one was more imbued with the idea than I, that whoever provoked a war in Europe would have the whole of public opinion against him, and consequently would have no ally, no *neutrale bienveillant*, but opponents enough. The utterances imputed to F. M.\* Moltke, I added, were a view held by everyone at strife with another *de se mettre en avantage*, but no politician, and consequently not he himself, would ever wish to plunge Europe into a war for frivolous reasons.

To these remarks the Queen replied, that without my knowing it other persons in my *entourage* had openly expressed similar views. She would not, however, go into this matter further, as the whole business had been relegated to oblivion.

\* Field-marshal.

I thanked her, of course, for her letter, which was very friendly, and as regards the latter remark said that as she had mentioned no name I would take no further steps.<sup>1</sup>

I could not leave you in ignorance of this correspondence, so I now inform you of it, as I find you are no longer cutting yourself off from business.

I am approaching the end of my "cure" and have felt well through it, although the weather has by no means favoured us; the first twelve days were abominable, then it was better, and we had four fine days, then again for hours and sometimes days at a time we had such mists, rain, and low temperatures that one might have imagined we were in October.

I hope your health, too, has continued to improve, as you said it was doing.

I am going to Salzburg to-morrow, to Eger on the 8th., and to Babelsberg on the 9th.; I shall not, however, be able to rest long there, for I go to Detmold on the 15th, to see the Arminius Monument unveiled on the 16th. On Sept. 2nd. I have to go to Weimar to inaugurate the statue of the old Grand-Duke, and on the 4th. to invest the Grand-Duke, at the wish of the King of Spain, with the Fleece. News from this latter country are at last more favourable; may things remain so satisfactory.

With my kind regards to yours, I remain

Your faithfully devoted friend

WILHELM.

Marginal note by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> sorry.

I have received with most respectful thanks your Majesty's gracious letter of the 8th.\* inst. from Gastein, and was especially glad to learn that your Majesty is feeling the

\* Should be 6th.

benefit of the "cure," in spite of all the bad weather in the Alps. I have the honour to return herewith the letter from Queen Victoria; it would have been very interesting if your Majesty had gone more fully into the question of the origin of the war rumours. The sources must have been regarded by the exalted lady as being very trustworthy, or her Majesty would not have alluded to them again, and the English Government would not have been impelled to take such important steps of such an unfriendly nature towards us. I do not know whether your Majesty considers it practicable to take Queen Victoria at her word when her Majesty states that it would be easy for her to prove that her fears were *not* exaggerated. It would, moreover, be of importance to learn how such "vigorous errors" found their way to Windsor. The allusion to persons who must be considered as "representatives" of your Majesty's Government seems to point to Count Münster. The latter may, like Count Moltke, quite well have spoken academically of the expediency of an attack made at the right moment on France, although I do not know it, and he has never been instructed to do so. One may indeed say that peace is not furthered if France feels secure that she will not be attacked under *any* circumstances, let her do what she may. I would never, to-day any more than I did in 1867 on the Luxemburg question, try to persuade your Majesty at once to make war merely because it is probable the adversary will soon begin it; one can never be sufficiently sure of recognising the ways of Divine Providence. But it is also not advantageous to give an opponent the *assurance* that his attack will *in any case* be awaited. I should, therefore, not blame Münster if he had, on occasion, spoken in this wise, and the English Government would have had no right to base official steps on the unofficial speeches of an Ambassador, and, *sans nous dire gare*, to invite the other powers to exert pressure on us. One must assume from such a serious and unfriendly proceeding that Queen Vic-

toria had other reasons for believing in our warlike intentions than occasional expressions employed by Count Münster in the course of conversation, and which I do not believe in. Lord O. Russell \* asserts that he has at all times reported his firm belief that our intentions are peaceable. On the other hand, all the ultramontanists and their friends have accused us secretly and publicly in the press of desiring an early war, and the French Ambassador, who lives in these circles, has sent their lies to Paris as positive news. But even that would not suffice to give Queen Victoria trust in and make her rely on untruths disclaimed by *your Majesty* yourself, and which her Majesty mentions in her letter of June 20th. I am too little acquainted with the Queen's peculiarities to have an opinion as to whether it is possible that the expression "it is easy to prove" might be intended only to mask a precipitant move which has already been taken, instead of openly acknowledging the same.

Will your Majesty pardon me if the interest of the "expert" makes me prolix on this settled point, after three months' restraint.

The Turkish affairs can hardly assume great proportions if only the three Imperial courts remain of one accord, and towards this it is your Majesty who can exert the most effectual influence, for we are the only ones who for the present and for a long time to come have no interests at stake. Moreover, it can only be of advantage to us if public attention and the policy of the other powers were turned for a time from the German-French question.

As your Majesty was gracious enough to mention my health, I most respectfully report that the six weeks' "cure" which I have undergone at Kissingen has affected me more than in other previous years. I have become very feeble, can walk but little, and cannot ride at all. A *régime* of malt baths and mineral baths will, it is said, pull me round again,

\* British Ambassador in Berlin.

and the first four have, indeed, had a good effect. I hope, therefore, that the next six weeks will make me more fit for business again, although I fear that I shall have to reckon on your Majesty's gracious indulgence to a greater extent than appears admissible to my sense of duty. My wife and daughter most respectfully thank your Majesty for graciously remembering them, and recommend themselves to your Majesty's favour.

V. BISMARCK.

213

VARZIN, *September 11, '75.*

With my wife and daughter, I thank your Majesty in deepest humility for your Majesty's gracious congratulations,\* and hope that God will grant also to me the favour your Majesty has enjoyed of seeing the relations with the children undisturbed by the establishment of a new home.

The separation will nevertheless produce a feeling of loneliness in the house, especially for my wife. I am extremely glad to see, from the fact that your Majesty is leaving for Silesia, that the Weimar cold has been overcome, and hope to God that your Majesty's health will not be too sorely tried by this series of exhausting exertions.

The news in your Majesty's letter with respect to the Ambassador at St. Petersburg † has surprised me, and from your Majesty's allusions to the direction of his endeavours,‡ I must fear that we shall lose his services. It will be difficult to replace him in the service. I have a very high opinion of his character; I have known him for full twenty years, and have never observed in him other than absolutely honourable ideas, actions, and impulses. Apart from all ex-

\* The Countess Marie v. Bismarck's engagement with Count Wend zu Eulenburg.

† Prince Henry VII. of Reuss.

‡ He contemplated becoming engaged to Princess Marie, the second daughter of the Grand-Duke Karl Alexander of Saxe-Weimar. The wedding took place on February 6th, 1876.



ternals, I consider him a man whom one can recommend any woman to marry, and as a husband and a man of honour to be relied on in every way. At the same time he has seen enough of the world to know how to deal with most difficult family affairs. His wife must have money if his household is to be maintained *au niveau* of the opinion held by the Princes of Reuss of their position. I am convinced, however, that *this* one would bring into the home all the qualities which can be regarded as a guarantee for a happy marriage. I believe, too, that his health is excellent.

My wife and daughter request me to present to your Majesty their most dutiful and grateful respects.

V. BISMARCK.

214

BERLIN, December 5, '75.

I have just heard of the painful blow \* that has struck you all, but especially your dear daughter, and I hasten to express to you my sincere and most cordial sympathy! May God assist you to bear what He ordains!!

Your

WILHELM.

215

BERLIN, December 18, '75.

You will see from the enclosures that a Princess Salm-Salm wishes to marry a Mr. Padberg, and that in spite of the difficulties in the way both parties persist in pressing on the union. In order somewhat to lessen the gulf between a Princess and a commoner, the lady and her mother desire that the intended husband shall be ennobled. The latter has a government appointment at Magdeburg, is well spoken of as an official, and in society, but he belongs to the ultramontane party, though to its most moderate section; this

\* The death of Count Wend zu Eulenburg.

circumstances does not *in any way* affect his official work, as is pointed out, although he expressed very orthodox opinions in a document published in 1869. You will find all this mentioned in the enclosures as *pro* and *contra*, and also my marginal notes on the report of the Herald's Office. One point is raised in this report, and rightly, as a strong reason against the ennoblement, viz., that the said Padberg refused on a certain occasion to respond to the toast of your health, and is said to have used some very strong expressions when referring to you and the Minister for Public Instruction in connection with the church difficulties. Although I might, for various reasons, be inclined to agree to the ennoblement in order to make two lovers happy, I cannot think of proceeding in the matter if, on account of feeling personally aggrieved, you should express a contrary opinion!

I request you, therefore, to give me your opinion on this point before I can arrive at a decision.

Your

WILHELM.

216

BERLIN, December 20, '75.

YOUR MAJESTY,

I have received your Majesty's gracious letter concerning the Salm-Padberg matter with most respectful thanks for your Majesty's gracious communication and consideration. The episode touching myself personally has long been known to me; such outbursts of party hatred against me are, however, of such frequent occurrence, that I attached no importance to Padberg's attitude towards me. I take the liberty, therefore, of begging your Majesty not to allow any possible grievance of mine to influence your Majesty's decision on this question, and to decide solely in accordance with essential and political considerations bearing on the case.\*

V. BISMARCK.

\* Adam Peter Padberg was elevated to the peerage and married the Princess Salm-Salm in 1876.

217

BERLIN, December 28, '75.

On the occasion of the last two bestowals of the Golden Fleece on Prince Carl (Rancés)\* and Friedrich Karl (?) the Spanish Envoys have received from me the 1st class of the Order of the Red Eagle. The same must be done to-day, and I think the 1st class sufficient, and *not* the Grand Cross?

I hope you will come to the ceremony, which lasts barely a quarter of an hour, in order to make your first appearance as a Knight of the Fleece. I will *not* press you to attend the dinner. Five Prussian Protestant Knights of the Fleece are *unparalleled* in the history of the Order!

Your

WILHELM.

218

BERLIN, February 3, '76.

I have just read a newspaper cutting in which it is stated definitely that the Reichstag Buildings bill will be thrown out to-morrow by a majority of twenty-five votes.

I must beg you to use the short time that yet remains in an endeavour to move the members who listen to you, and who certainly will number more than twenty-five, to vote for the bill. It is further stated that the Ministers have *preserved* complete *silence* with respect to the latter, in order that it shall fall through; this I cannot believe, as it was at my instigation that the Ministry brought in the bill.

Your

WILHELM.

The same newspaper cutting again demands the Wilhelm-Strasse gardens, the portion of the Thier-Garten *vis-a-vis*, and the Industrial Museum etc., which I shall certainly not give up.

\* Rancés y Villanueva was Spanish Envoy at Berlin during the reign of Queen Isabella.

219

BERLIN, *February 16, '76.*

I have just spoken to Count Karolyi about the Vienna post. When I named Count Stolberg, his first words were: "Excellent, politically and personally the happiest choice, the Emperor will hold out both hands to receive him."

It may thus be taken for granted, and the Ambassador considered it certain, that the Imperial assent will be given immediately, in response to his application by telegraph. In the further course of the conversation, Count Karolyi again in other forms gave expression to his satisfaction, and requested me to place at your Majesty's feet his personal thanks for a choice which manifests before the world your Majesty's sincere and friendly feelings towards Austria.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the Emperor:

Exceedingly gratifying, if the Vienna statement is in the same tenor. W.

*February 17, '76.*

220

BERLIN, *February 27, '76.*

You know that I have bestowed the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle on Prince Reuss VII., partly in recognition of his services as an Ambassador, partly on account of his marriage, and for the latter reason I allowed him to pass over the Order of the Crown. But now I am faced by Schweinitz's position. I wish to express also to him my recognition of his services as Ambassador in Vienna. Shall I treat him just as I have Reuss, or give him only the Order of the Crown with the ribbon?

I recently conferred on the commanding generals \* the

\* Alvensleben, Hann v. Weyhern, Kirchbach, Tümpling, Bose, Werder (before the enemy), Franzeki, Boyen, Voigts Rhetz. (Note by the Emperor.)

Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle, thus allowing them to pass over the Order of the Crown; shall I place an Ambassador, who is *not* a Prince of a ruling house, and has *not* married the daughter of a Grand-Duke, on an equality with the old commanding generals *because* he is an Ambassador?

Please report to me your opinion.

At the same time I would ask if you have any objection to raise against my bestowing on Count Brandenburg the star of the second class of the Order of the Red Eagle?<sup>1</sup> There may be *others senior* to him, but *vu son extraction* \* he and his brothers have always been privileged.

Your

WILHELM.

Marginal note by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> None whatever.

## 221

EMS, July 1, '76.

MY DEAR PRINCE BISMARCK,

As the Duchy of Lauenburg is united to-day with my monarchy, in accordance with the law of the 23rd of last month, I have resolved to grant you, as possessor of the entailed estate of Schwarzenbek, the hereditary right to a seat and a vote in the Prussian Upper House. I inform you of this now, but will have a special document prepared for you, giving fuller particulars with respect to the inheritance of the right I have bestowed on you, and remain,

Your

Affectionate

WILHELM.

\* The father of Counts Friedrich, Wilhelm, and Gustav v. Brandenburg was a son of King Friedrich Wilhelm II. by his morganatic marriage with the Countess v. Doenhoff.



GASTEIN, July 22, '76.

As there was so little time at Würzburg, I was not able again to bring up a subject in connection with our internal affairs which, in spite of reports by Delbrück and Camp-hausen before you came to Berlin in the autumn, has continually occupied my attention, and especially during my recent Rhine journey. I mean the stagnation in our iron trade. It was shown to me in those reports that our export of iron still exceeds the imports. I enquired how it happened that one iron-works after another is closing its doors and dismissing its workmen (who can find no employment elsewhere), and that those which continue working do so at a loss, and must also soon blow out their fires.

I was told in reply: Yes, that is the state of affairs, but in such general calamitous times individuals must be ruined, and we are more fortunate than other countries (Belgium). Is that a politically wise conception of the case? Matters have unfortunately been in this state for several years past. And from January 1, 1877 iron is to be imported into Germany *free of all duty*, whereas France is introducing a *premium* on her *export* of iron to Germany! The consequence of such conditions as these can only be that what still remains of our iron-trade must be ruined!

I by no means desire that the much praised system of free-trade shall be given up, but I must request that, before the Reichstag re-assembles, the question be again ventilated: "whether the bill allowing foreign iron to be admitted into Germany duty free must not be temporarily postponed for a year?" If you agree with me, I await your report as to what arrangements you will make.

Your

WILHELM.

How have you been since Würzburg?

223

BERLIN, *March 21, '77.*

YOUR MAJESTY,

I had hoped personally to place at your Majesty's feet my most respectful thanks for the fresh proof of the sovereign favour \* brought to me by Count Redern; my doctor tells me, however, that by going out to-day I should reduce the prospect of being able to appear before your Majesty *to-morrow*. I restrict myself, therefore, to-day to this written expression of my gratitude, and of the pleasure your Majesty has given me by this mark of sovereign recognition, and by the gracious words which accompany the same. I shall not, unfortunately, myself be able to fulfil the duties of a chief master of the Hunt in your Majesty's faithful Duchy of Pomerania with my former vigour, and my former delight in the chase; but my son, to whom your Majesty was gracious enough to stand sponsor twenty-five years ago at Frankfurt, will, if it pleases God, be mindful for long years to come of his exalted god-father in carrying out this high office.

The neighbouring estate to his there is that of Count Kleist, the hereditary High Steward of the Kitchen, so that the Pomeranian offices will be able to work hand in hand in the service of their Duke. I hope that it may be granted to me to repeat my most humble thanks by word of mouth to-morrow, when I offer my most respectful and cordial congratulations.

V. BISMARCK.

224

BERLIN, *June 1, '77.*

Although I regret very much that I have to trouble you again, I cannot remain silent at a time when a case occurs

\* His appointment as hereditary Chief Master of the Hunt in the Duchy of Pomerania.

in our religious *belief* which I cannot master and of which I must acquaint you.

The preacher Sydow affair has now, after two years, produced the most poisonous fruit! He was acquitted by the Chief Ecclesiastical Council in order that he should not pose as a martyr, as in that case he would only have obtained more followers. At that time he refrained from proclaiming his heretical doctrines from the *pulpit* and teaching them in catechism lessons, and contented himself with preaching them before thousands in private lectures. But what is taking place nowadays here? Preacher Hossbach, of the Andreas Church, is invited, as a candidate for the post of the lately deceased Bachmann, to give a trial sermon in the Jacobi Church. In this sermon he announces to the community, so that they may know exactly what is in store for them, that he does not belong to the old school of theologians, but to the new theologians who study to free the Apostolic faith from the fables and inventions which are the *work of men* (the evangelists) as well as from the assumption that the Saviour was God-man; he further announces that *in his estimation* the Saviour was a man blessed with God's special favour, and consequently occupies a higher position as a most excellent man, but not as the Son of God! A large proportion of the community left the church when this statement was made—but he was yesterday chosen by this community as their preacher!!

A second case which shows what we have come to in our church is the invitation of the Berlin District Synod to a conference on the 5th inst., in which No. 15 of the sixteen points for discussion runs:

Proposition: That the confession of faith shall no longer be read at *Divine service* or at *church ceremonies*!

These two facts struck me as being so very terrible that I could not help expressing, in very serious language, to the Minister for Public Instruction and to President Herrmann,

my wonder that it should be possible for such things to transpire under the eyes of the church government without due steps being taken! I also raised the question whether, as in Sydow's case, immediate suspension from duty and an enquiry should not be ordered.

If things go on in this way, and in view also of the fact that the number of persons objecting to have their children baptised and to be married by the church is on the increase, irreligion will be *fostered*, and then there is but one step from the denial of the Godhead of Christ to the *abolition* of God, as in France!

Your

WILHELM.

## 225

VARZIN, July 28, '77.

A communication received yesterday from Admiral Henk informs me that your Majesty has been gracious enough to have the sloop, which was launched at Kiel on the 25th inst., named after me. Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to accept my most respectful and deeply-felt thanks for this fresh and high distinction. I would gladly manifest my thanks by seeking to serve your Majesty soon again, in the navigable waters of my official duties, with the devotion and effort that the crew of your Majesty's ship "Bismarck" will apply to their duties on the seas. I hope next month to be able to improve, in Gastein, the favourable prospects I have obtained at Kissingen. At the present moment I do not, unfortunately, know when I can start; a severe cold, produced by the unsettled weather, keeps me in my room and for the most part of the day to my bed. I hardly expect, therefore, to be able in person to place at your Majesty's feet at Gastein my most humble thanks that your Majesty has graciously thought of me while in the Alps.

V. BISMARCK.

VARZIN, *August 11, '77.*

I most respectfully thank your Majesty for the gracious letter of the 6th from Gastein, and, with your Majesty, deeply regret the incautious dispersal of the Russian army, and the disasters which have resulted therefrom. Not that I fear that politically anything dangerous to Germany's peace may ensue; on the contrary, these unexpected Turkish victories have removed for the present the possibility of the war assuming wider dimensions through the intervention of England or through Austria becoming uneasy. But it is impossible to read without profound sympathy of the misfortune which has befallen these brave troops, united in friendship with us, and to hear without feelings of exasperation about the shameful cruelties inflicted by the Turks on wounded and unarmed men. It is difficult to preserve the diplomatic calm in the presence of such barbarisms, and I think the feeling of indignation must be general among all the Christian powers. It would, perhaps, be in accordance with your Majesty's intentions, if the Foreign Office addressed a communication to this effect to the other Cabinets, inviting them to make joint representations to the Porte. These occurrences are a testimony for the Russians that in this war they are really the champions of Christian civilisation against heathen barbarians.

I rejoice to obtain from your Majesty's letter a confirmation of my conviction that Germany cannot countenance any humiliation of Russia, and that your Majesty will "stick to the colours" as regards Czar Alexander, that is, will maintain the *neutralité bienveillante*, and will give diplomatic support to Russia's reasonable wishes at the peace negotiations which are evidently still further postponed; also to such wishes as are based not on general Christian principles but on justified Russian desires. Russia will, it is true, be able



to vindicate such wishes only as a conqueror, and victory will perhaps turn her back on her for a long time yet, if, as the last reports of a *third* battle at Plevna (should they prove true) would show, she continues attempting to take quickly, and with insufficient troops, strong positions occupied by the enemy. The only result of such tactics is a useless sacrifice of brave soldiers. Your Majesty feared that the Turks would renew the fighting before the Russian reinforcements arrived: according to the newspapers, it appears that the Russians lack the patience to await better conditions. One fruit at least of your Majesty's policy appears to be mature, viz. that the right estimation is placed on Germany's friendship by public opinion in Russia. The recent endeavours of Prince Gortchakoff and other anti-German politicians to find a hostile feeling towards us at first in Austria and then possibly in France, but to discredit Germany in the opinion of the Russian people and army, have definitely failed; we have continued to be on good terms with England, and the formerly anti-German Moscovites are now desirous of sending an address to your Majesty; your Majesty has confirmed the Austrian friendship at Ischl, and the traducers of the German policy, who have hitherto been indefatigable in their efforts, no longer find listeners for their fables about our hankering for war. The three Emperors' alliance will, with God's help, still be able, under your Majesty's leadership, to preserve a free course for Czar Alexander, and peace for the rest of Europe. I shall esteem myself fortunate when I can again serve your Majesty with all my powers, in fulfilling this glorious task. At present I cannot, unfortunately, think of it; although the malady itself has retreated since I was at Kissingen, my general state of weakness is now almost greater than it was before I started for Kissingen. Any mental work excites my nerves, and drives away sleep. If I abstained completely from work, I should fall into irreconcilable disagreement with

some of my colleagues on questions relating to internal legislation. Bills are brought forward in my absence which I consider prejudicial to trade, or unpractical, and the fight against this tendency gives me very much work; I have still more work through my desire to inaugurate reforms which I consider necessary in our customs and taxation laws, and in the railway department, but for which I meet with no support. I am the only one of your Majesty's Ministers, leaving Friedenthal out of the question, who, by virtue of his possessions, is also one of "the governed," and feels *with these* where and how the shoe pinches which is fitted on us by directions from the green table of the legislature. The Ministers, their councillors, and the majority of the deputies, are scholars, without possessions, without a trade; they are not interested in industry or commerce, and are ignorant of practical life; their bills, being almost entirely the work of lawyers, cause considerable mischief, and the minority of deputies in the Reichstag and the Landtag who are practical men unfortunately prefer to dabble in politics rather than to attend to their material interests. Thus it happens that a bill which is prejudicial to the latter group, *if* only it is brought in by the Ministers, is easily passed through the Parliaments by the majority of *savants* and officials, generally in a worse form than when it was introduced. Will your Majesty pardon this statement of the circumstances which compel me to work here while my health demands quietness. It is *not* foreign affairs that are wearing me out.

I ought to go to Gastein but cannot make up my mind to take the journey, owing to debility and a reluctance to return to the world.

My wife, who is to take the waters at Tölz, in Bavaria, tenders most respectful thanks for your Majesty's gracious greetings, and desires most humbly to recommend herself to your Majesty's favour.

V. BISMARCK.

227

BERLIN, *December 24, '77.*

In order that Varzin may not be without a likeness of the grateful undersigned, of whom Berlin already possesses several, I choose Christmas-time to send you myself on horseback, although I fear that in the attitude in which I am represented I *must* one day break my back!

Wishing you and your family a happy Christmas,

Your grateful,

WILHELM.

228

VARZIN, *December 30, '77.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious Christmas present, which will be a permanent ornament to my house here. Although, as your Majesty's gracious note points out, the natural attitude in which we contemporaries are accustomed to see the most illustrious rider on horseback, is in some sense not reproduced, one must allow for the fact that the artist is bound by certain laws when fashioning a monument, and must admit that, by the deviation from the natural, the impression of the portrait, when viewed from the *front*, is considerably enhanced.

With my thanks I take the liberty of placing my most respectful congratulations at your Majesty's feet. May God preserve your Majesty in the new year in continued health, and in all the blessings that have hitherto accompanied your Majesty's reign. I shall esteem myself fortunate if I can soon resume my duties in the new year, and fulfil them to your Majesty's satisfaction. For some days past I have been in the grasp of a severe influenza, which affects me so much that I have been able to get up but for a very short time to-day. I am, therefore, unable without doing myself serious harm, to extend this letter

to a political report. I have requested Count Lehnendorff, who left me yesterday, to make some communications to your Majesty with respect to enquiries I have made through Benningsen. According to these, I expect the Reichstag will receive favourably an increase of the indirect taxes, if a *comprehensive* reforming proposal is made. *Large* amounts (from tobacco, beer, and similar objects) will be more readily granted than small and modest *expédients* and make-shifts. I hope, when I am in better health, soon to be able to solve this apparent riddle.

V. BISMARCK.

229

BERLIN, December 30, '77.

For some time past the newspapers<sup>1</sup> have been speaking of a complete modification of the Ministry of State, and have even mentioned names, without any positive denial of such reports having been issued. Yesterday's *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* now publishes in its second and third columns such communications from other newspapers, and discusses them in such a peculiar manner that they might be regarded as being semi-official.<sup>2</sup> This is especially the case with the assurance that you have submitted to me a plan for the modification, and that I have entirely approved it!!<sup>3</sup>

This is going<sup>4</sup> too far, and cannot be left without a denial.<sup>5</sup> I wish this to come from you semi-officially, as no one knows better than yourself that you have not communicated a single syllable to me on this subject.<sup>6</sup>

The newspapers go so far as to state that you summoned Herr v. Benningsen to Varzin, in order to prepare with him this great revolution,<sup>7</sup> and that he is to have the Ministry of the Interior? This has struck me so much that I must begin to believe there is really something of the kind in progress, of which I am left entirely in ignorance!

Count Eulenburg, who took leave of me yesterday, would

absolutely not believe me when I assured him that I knew nothing.<sup>8</sup> I must, therefore, request you to inform me of what is really being done. With regard to Benningsen, I should not be able to greet with confidence his entry into the Ministry, for, capable as he is, he would *not* be able to pursue the *quiet*, and *conservative*, course of my Government!<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, I wish you and yours a happy New Year, and above *all*, health!

Your  
WILHELM.

Marginal notes by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> I have nothing to report, and being ill cannot concern myself about the newspapers.

<sup>2</sup> from whom? from me therefore?

<sup>3</sup> the conclusion disavows all that.

<sup>4</sup> who? I? <sup>5</sup> It *is a démenti*. <sup>6</sup> I should have plenty to do, with all the papers. <sup>7</sup> without the Royal signature? <sup>8</sup> the hypocrite! <sup>9</sup> with Eulenburg! <sup>10</sup> he would, nevertheless.

230

BERLIN, January 2, '78.

Receive my cordial thanks for your letter \* with its New Year's wishes, which I accept gladly, as at the same time the hope is expressed that you would certainly be here for the Reichstag, and that is the best New Year's gift for me!

My letter to you crossed yours, and is fully answered by the concluding sentence in yours; do not, therefore, reflect further on a reply. It stands to reason that there could be no truth in all the rumours, it was only the summoning of Benningsen which disquieted me, and as I can never forbid you carefully to examine beforehand persons whom you really intend to propose to me for high positions, this *inquiétude* too is quite removed, seeing that B. is *not* a candi-

\* Of December 30, '77.



date. I heard, unfortunately, through Count Lehndorff, that you did not feel well during the last few days of his stay at Varzin, and that this indisposition threatened to confine you to your bed. I hope it will pass quickly, so that you may be able to come for the Reichstag quite recovered. The burning political question, whether there is to be peace or war, is entirely in England's hands; but I fear that, considering Queen Victoria's desire for war, and her Jewish chief adviser,\* who confirms her in her desire, matters will lead to a prolongation of the war, and then to far greater complications for Europe. *Enfin, qui vivra, verra.*

Your

faithfully devoted

WILHELM.

231

COBLENZ, November 6, '78.

It has been granted to you in the short space of a *quarter of a year*, by your insight, your circumspection, and by your courage, partly to restore and partly to maintain peace for Europe, and by statutory methods to withstand an enemy in Germany which threatened to undo the very state itself. All well-disposed persons recognise the world-wide significance of these two historical events, and I have already shown my appreciation for the first-named event, viz. the Berlin Congress; it is, however, only fitting that I should give public expression to my acknowledgment also of the resolution with which you have defended the legal status. The law † which I have in my mind, and which owes its inception to an event ‡ of very painful memory to me, is to assure to the German States, Prussia therefore included, their present lawful standpoint.

\* The Earl of Beaconsfield.

† The anti-Socialists Law.

‡ The attempts on his life by Hödel and by Nobiling, on May 11, and June 2, 1878.

To mark my appreciation of your great services in the cause of my Prussia, I have chosen for you the insignia of its power, viz. the crown, sceptre, and sword, which I have had added to the Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle you always wear, and this decoration I send you enclosed herewith.

The sword signifies the courage and the judgment you have shown in supporting and defending my sceptre and my crown!

May Providence still accord you strength to devote your patriotism, for long years to come, to my Government, and to the welfare of the Fatherland!

Your

truly devoted, grateful

WILHELM.

232

BERLIN, *November 9, '78.*

Your Majesty prepared a surprise for me with the gracious letter of the 6th, which was all the more gratifying as it arrived simultaneously with your Majesty's most kindly message referring to my daughter's festival day,\* and to the mixed feelings which must move my wife and myself. Only someone who has seen an only daughter leave the home could fully appreciate your Majesty's delicate attention in sending us words of consolation. Will your Majesty forgive me for expressing my thanks in the first place, for an act of grace which touches the home and the heart. In my capacity as your Majesty's servant in the Empire and in the State I am ashamed that your Majesty should have acknowledged my intense, but unfortunately already lame efforts faithfully to do my duty, with a fresh distinction, and especially with such kindly words, which have struck deeply into my heart. The severe visitation which has befallen

\* Her marriage with Count zu Rantzau.

your Majesty, not only by being wounded on the field where monarchs do battle nowadays, but also through men's ingratitude, to which expression is given in crime and all that attaches thereto, constitutes for me a fresh bond of duty, binding me firmer than ever to the sovereign service. The baseness of the disloyal acts as a spur to the loyalty of faithful subjects, and since then I have prayed to God more fervently than ever for the health which I need in order to evince to your Majesty by deeds, as long as I live, my heartfelt gratitude, and my fidelity as a born vassal of the Brandenburg ruling house.

My health leaves much to be desired; I need for some time absolute rest, which I have not been able to obtain for years past; I hope to find it at Friedrichsruh while the Landtag is sitting, and will not let my own weakness interfere with the gladness with which I hear through Lehndorff of your Majesty's returning strength, and see by your Majesty's firm handwriting how much benefit the maimed right hand is obtaining at Gastein.

V. BISMARCK.

233

THE PRINCESS BISMARCK TO THE EMPEROR WILLIAM

BERLIN, *November 14, '78.*

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS EMPEROR!

MOST GRACIOUS KING AND LORD!

Your Majesty afforded me infinite consolation by the gracious expression of fellow-feeling on the day when, notwithstanding all the gladness, the parents' hearts are filled with anxious sorrow! The beautiful presents, most graciously sent by your Majesty, are a blessing-bringing evidence to me and mine of your Majesty's most gracious recollection of us, and I may take it as a particularly good omen that, on the occasion of my child's departure from our close family intercourse, your Majesty is graciously pleased

to recall a similar event in your Majesty's family. My daughter wore on her wedding-day your Majesty's wonderful bracelet, and her Majesty the Empress's beautiful pin, and was inexpressibly happy in the feeling that your Majesty's blessing accompanies her in her new life.

I put the sentiments of the young couple into words by most respectfully begging your Majesty to continue most graciously to accord them the great favour they have hitherto been so fortunate as to receive at your Majesty's hands.

With the most fervent prayers that your Majesty may, by God's gracious help, soon return in complete health, I re-iterate my most deeply-felt thanks for the most charming present; which never leaves me, and remain, in deepest respect,

Your Majesty's  
most obedient servant till death.

J. PRINCESS BISMARCK.

## 234

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *December 3, '78.*

To my extreme regret, I shall not be able to join my colleagues in tendering to your Majesty most respectful greetings \* to-morrow. I can only place at your Majesty's feet in writing my most cordial wish that God's blessing may bring your Majesty, on resuming the Government, consolation and satisfaction for the crimes and the ingratitude of men, which must have wounded your Majesty as severely inwardly as externally.

The sudden transition from the Gastein "cure" to the work in the Reichstag seems to have hindered my recovery, so that I am not so well now as I was in September. If your Majesty will graciously grant me four to six weeks' more solitude and forest air, free from all work, I feel that

\* On the Emperor's return to Berlin.

I may hope, with God's help, to be able to place myself at your Majesty's disposal to January, with renewed strength for the work of preparing for the Reichstag. The debates in the Reichstag will be very difficult this year, owing to the necessity of extensive financial and economic reforms, and will presumably be accompanied by hard fighting among the different parties and against your Majesty's Government. I have, however, no doubts of ultimate success, if only it is possible to preserve unanimity in the Ministry of State itself, and with the more important Federal Government, and to maintain that firmness and resolution of the Government which your Majesty's leadership has secured for us in all difficult situations, and to which, through God's aid, we owe such eminent results.

V. BISMARCK.

235

BERLIN, December 7, '78.

No one regretted your absence more than I, on my return to Berlin the day before yesterday; however, the reasons for your non-appearance given in the letter handed to me by Minister von Bülow are so conclusive, that I think it quite natural you should not be here! Your health comes before everything, especially in view of the many and important debates anticipated in the Reichstag. The rest, which you desire to have prolonged, will, it is to be hoped, so fortify your health and vigour that you will be able successfully to face these debates with your accustomed firmness and resolution.

I coincide with your opinion that I should give Count Karolyi my bust in marble. This is a loss that can indeed be *filled*, but will with difficulty be *replaced*.

With remembrances to your wife, from whom, as also from your daughter, I have received such kind replies,

I remain,

Your

WILHELM.



## 236

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *December 29, '78.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious Christmas present, the impression on which is devoted to the "remembrance" \* of events which have left painful feelings in the hearts of us all. Nevertheless, I cannot look at the medal without a sentiment of deep gratitude to God, who has willed that, after such a severe wound, after such a painful blow to the mental and bodily faculties, your Majesty should be restored to perfect health, and to fresh participation in your exalted vocation. The medal, which it has been permitted to your Majesty to have struck, is a monument to the danger which, by God's help, has been averted from your Majesty and from Germany, and it would be showing ingratitude to God not to let this feeling take precedence of the sad "remembrance" of what happened on June 2nd.

Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to accept the most respectful wishes which I, in common with all other faithful servants, tender for the New Year, trusting that the Divine favour, which has been the means of restoring your Majesty to health during the past year, may confer further blessings on your Majesty in the new year. The united prayers of the Christian and loyal majority of your Majesty's subjects will not remain unanswered.

V. BISMARCK.

## 237

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *January 15, '79.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious letter of yesterday, and am glad that your Majesty has commanded a report from Count Stolberg on the Papal question. This is a purely Prussian matter, and I should very unwillingly anticipate my colleagues in the Prussian Ministry

\* Of the attempts on the Emperor's life on May 11, and June 2.

of State and especially the Minister for Public Instruction \* with my opinions.

I would agree with any public statement which was restricted to a declaration of *our* peaceable intentions, and should, as a matter of fact, consider such a statement useful. As it is difficult for me to write myself (owing to numbness of the right wrist, from the Kuhlmann wound) I beg most respectfully to be allowed to dictate, and to enclose herewith, some reasons, for my opinion.

My health is otherwise slowly improving, and would be already much better were I not over-burdened with work in connection with the bills to be held before the Reichstag, and in which I unfortunately obtain very little voluntary and well-meant assistance.

I hope to be in Berlin at your Majesty's command in about a fortnight.

V. BISMARCK.

## 238

BERLIN, March 16, '79.

There is a tendency among the new men in the Reichstag to reject the measures proceeding *directly* from the Imperial Government, and to use the powers vested in them to establish a *parliamentary government*.

Here are the proofs:

1. The Government left it in the hands of Parliament to decide on the admission of the Social-Democrats who had been expelled, although it had the right to prevent this admission by arresting the latter. The Reichstag, knowing perfectly well the opinion of the Government that the admission should not be allowed, decided (unfortunately, with the aid of the Conservatives) *for the admission*.

2. The Reichstag rejected the Government proposal to render the Disciplinary law more severe, *without*, as the constitution demands, first debating, and amending, and then

\* Who is responsible for all religious matters. (Translator's note.)

throwing it out, and *itself assumed the right* to bring in such a bill.

3. The Reichstag now demands, after *I* had ordered the enquiry on the sinking of the "Great Elector," after *I* had *appointed* the Supreme Court to pronounce the verdict of this enquiry, as the decision on this verdict rests entirely with *me*, and this *purely* military matter would have been definitely concluded,—the Reichstag now demands that the documents and papers relating to this affair shall be laid before it, thus, constituting itself a judge over the Royal-Imperial Prerogative! If this is carried through, a precedent is established, the consequences of which every child will see.

These three cases show whither the Reichstag is gravitating. This tendency must be opposed most resolutely, and I request you to draw the attention of the Imperial and Prussian officials, who come in contact with the Reichstag, to this opinion, and to make it as clear as possible to them, so that similar cases, which are certain soon to occur, may at once be decisively met.

Your

WILHELM.

To the Imperial Chancellor.

239

March 28, '79.

Receive my cordial thanks for your sympathy in the hard and painful blow \* which has befallen my house!!

Your

WILHELM.

240

BERLIN, April 1, '79.

Unfortunately, I cannot bring my wishes for to-day in person; I am allowed to drive out to-day for the first time, but cannot yet mount stairs.

\* The death of Prince Waldemar, the son of the Crown Prince, on March 27, 1879.

Before everything I wish you health, for on this depends all activity; you have developed your activity very much lately, which is a proof that it helps to keep you in health. For the welfare of the Fatherland, I can only hope that it will so continue!

I use this occasion to appoint your son-in-law, Count Rantzau, a Councillor of Legation, as I think that in doing this I shall give you pleasure. I also send you a copy of my great ancestor, the Great Elector, as he is represented on the Long Bridge, to serve as a memento of to-day, which I trust both for you and for us may often return.

Your

grateful

WILHELM.

241

BERLIN, *May 11, '79.*

Hearty thanks for your friendly remembrance of this painful anniversary,\* which by God's grace has been changed into a day of thanksgiving for my preservation and for all the sympathy that has been shown me.

Your

ever grateful

WILHELM.

242

VARZIN, *May 30, '79.*

I return the enclosure to your Majesty's most gracious autograph letter of yesterday's date, and take the liberty of most respectfully advising against making a communication to the Crown Prince of Denmark.

The statement made by his Royal Highness to her Majesty the Empress does not correspond with the real facts

\* Of Hodel's attempt on the Emperor's life.

of the case. There is no need to discuss the question whether the marriage \* really had an anti-German political background; a deputation of malcontent and conspiring subjects of your Majesty was, however, officially invited to the ceremonies at the Danish court, and this is directly opposed to the traditions of neighbouring sovereigns living in peaceable relations with each other. But what is of far more serious importance is the fact that the members of a Guelph deputation were distinguished with Danish orders, as if they officially constituted the suite of the Duke of Cumberland.

Your Majesty has refrained from any expression of resentment at this strong demonstration; the Imperial Envoy could not, of course, be present at the marriage of the Hanoverian pretender, but he and his successor have maintained the regular relations without even referring to the surprising demonstration. There is no manifestation on this side to make good, but only a one-sided violation, on the Danish side, of international usage, against which your Majesty has not uttered a word of remonstrance.

If his Danish Majesty himself should take a directly appeasing step in this matter towards your Majesty, in order to undo that regrettable demonstration, it would, in my most humble opinion, be advisable to accept the same in a friendly spirit. I would, however, consider it *too much* to follow up a verbal utterance by the Crown Prince at an accidental meeting with her Majesty the Empress with a written statement from your Majesty, drawn up by your Majesty's directions. Such a step might, moreover, be used by our neither honourable nor discreet enemies to prove that your Majesty felt impelled by conscience to remedy something in the affair, whereas such a feeling can only exist on the Danish side.

V. BISMARCK.

\* Of Duke Ernst August of Cumberland with the Princess Thyra, on Dec. 21, 1878.



## 243

(Fragmentary draft.)

BERLIN, July 13, '79.

I thank your Majesty most kindly for the gracious letter of the 9th inst. Friedenthal will undoubtedly wish to be made a peer; as I know Falk, he would prefer that this honour should be conferred on his son rather than on himself; on the other hand, in my most respectful opinion the rank and title of an ex-Minister of State would be appropriate for Falk, as he has fought for seven years with great bravery, and to the very serious detriment of his health, in the hard and exhausting battles of the church guard. He has thus gained a considerable reputation throughout the country, and has met with great appreciation. For this reason, I should also consider it politically very expedient to give public evidence that he leaves your Majesty's service *in full favour*.

As regards the position of his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, I have no information on the subject whether he will rule on fundamentally liberal principles when he is called by God's decree to assume the government. Personally, I doubt this; I certainly anticipate that if such a direction is really taken it will not be permanent.

V. BISMARCK.

## 244

MAINAU, July 20, '79.

Receive my best thanks for your letter, from which I learn that the picture has at last been completed and delivered; I am glad you like it. I also thank you for your letter on the subject of a certain expression you used with regard to Friedenthal's future. . . .

But above all, I must now congratulate you on the victory.

you have gained in the Reichstag.\* To your many outside victories must now be added this one on internal financial questions. You undertook to stir up a wasp's nest, and I sided with you from conviction, although I feared the result of your enterprise. It is rare that such a complete change of public opinion has been achieved in such a short time, and one sees that after immense work and effort you hit the right nail on the head; some damage may have been done in the process, but a majority of 160 votes is a triumph which will sweeten many of your bitter hours of preparation and of fighting. The Fatherland will bless you for this—although the opposition may not do so!

Your grateful King

WILHELM.

245

STETTIN, *September 15, '79.*

The journey, the review, and the patriotic receptions everywhere, all leave nothing to be desired. The troops splendid, as also the fleet, and the launch of the "Stein" yesterday.

Your

WILHELM

246

VARZIN, *December 30, '79.*

I most respectfully thank your Majesty for having graciously thought of me at the Christmas festival, and for having honoured your Majesty's "Chancellor in Germany," as he was styled in the holy Roman Empire, with a picture of Germania. My wife is taking charge of the gracious present for me until I can receive it myself in Berlin, which I hope to do in the first week of the new year. Little relapses, and the extreme weakness from which I am still suffering have compelled me repeatedly to postpone my departure for Berlin, and I shall, unfortunately, not be able to

\* On the question of the Customs Tariff reform.

be there on New Year's Day. I take the liberty, therefore, of placing my most respectful wishes at your Majesty's feet in writing, and ask God to continue His blessings on us and our earthly master, to preserve your Majesty in good health, and to grant me that I may again fulfil my service to your Majesty's satisfaction.

V. BISMARCK.

247

BERLIN, February 25, '80.

You inform me in the enclosure that Count Hohenlohe \* is coming here to consult about his occupying for some months the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. As you had not said anything to me about this arrangement, I am somewhat surprised at it, in view of the high and important position he holds as Ambassador in Paris. Is he perhaps designated for this office later on? He is certainly qualified for it, but the fact that he is a Catholic, although a moderate one, seems to me to render him unfit to fill it. It is impossible to foresee what negotiations may have to be conducted with the Curia, and circumstances may arise in which a Catholic, even with Prince H.'s views, might nullify the work of maintaining the attitude my Government must preserve *vis-à-vis* the Curia.

You hinted to me that the Prince wishes to have a higher position than his present one, but yourself at once added that there is none higher, even the post of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs cannot be regarded as superior to that of an Ambassador, especially at Paris.

As you are unfortunately prevented from reporting to me in person, please dictate your statement, or send it orally through a trustworthy person, or can I perhaps come to you?

Your

WILHELM.

\* German Ambassador in Paris.

248

BERLIN, *March 22, '80.*

I avail myself of this anniversary to give myself, and I hope you also, pleasure, by herewith appointing your eldest son, Count Herbert, a Councillor of Legation. His frequent employment under your personal direction, where he has fulfilled his duties to your and my satisfaction, give him a claim to this promotion, which everyone will understand.

Your

grateful King

WILHELM.

249

BERLIN, *March 22, '80.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious manner in which your Majesty has thought of me to-day, and I am extremely gratified that my son is a sharer in the favour with which your Majesty renders me happy, and makes it possible for me, even in bodily suffering, to fulfil my duties with gladness. My son will in any case inherit from me faithful attachment to your Majesty, but the gracious distinction, for which he has to thank this day, will also spur him on to distinguish himself among his fellows, by manifesting his fidelity also by diligent work in the sovereign service.

May God preserve your Majesty in the good health of which to-day's reports bear witness.

V. BISMARCK.

As my son's position does not permit him to thank your Majesty, I take the liberty of enclosing the official letter he has addressed to me.

V. BISMARCK.

250

BERLIN, *April 7, '80.*

My answer to your request \* of the 6th inst. is that, while I fully recognise the difficulties into which you may be brought by a conflict between the duties laid upon you by the constitution and the responsibility devolving on you, this does not move me to release you from your office because you believe you are unable to fulfil the task appointed for you by Clauses 16 and 17 of the Imperial Constitution. I must, on the contrary, trust to you to submit to me, and then to the Federal Council, proposals calculated to solve the difficulty produced by such a conflict of duties. W.

251

*(about May 13, '80.)*

The tumultuous endeavour made by the free-trade party under Delbrück's leadership, and with the aid of the Clericals, again to call into question the policy of protection for home industry established with so much difficulty last year, would have made no impression as a parliamentary event on me if, as I confidently expected, the Government had remained united, and ready to uphold its own constitutional rights against the encroachments of the Reichstag. It is, however, discouraging for me to learn that my progressive and free-trade opponents have succeeded, by means of false representations, in exciting sympathy at more than one German Court in their efforts against the policy which I pursue in accordance with your Majesty's intentions as well as I know them, and have hitherto pursued with success. I believed even last year that I was sure at least of the confidence

\* On April 3rd the Federal Council rejected a proposal, brought in by the Imperial Chancellor, to impose a stamp duty on receipts and Post Office orders, whereupon Bismarck handed in, on the 6th, a request to be released from his office.



of the German Governments in respect of this policy ; I now see, however, that I was mistaken, and that very slight inducements sufficed to bring the most reputable dynasties, and those which are most interested by the changes in European development, to the side of the party agitating against my efforts towards maintenance and consolidation. Instead of helping me, they increase my work by criticising it, and succeed in adding to the burden of work, which, as it is, I have no longer the strength to perform. The number of my personal and political opponents necessarily increases with time, and I also stand in the way of other candidates ; I regret only the more that my powers of resistance decline in the same proportion, owing to advancing age and illness. I cannot help being apprehensive that what Germany has attained by the bravery of her army under your Majesty's guidance is seriously imperilled by party struggle in Parliament and in the press with the connivance of dynastic and court influences, especially if contagious crises should break out in the great neighbouring countries. I should regard it as a peculiarly hard fate if, by continuing in office, I should sanction developments which I contend against, but cannot prevent. My anxiety concerning these retrograde developments exerts a paralysing influence on my forces.

Your Majesty has known for years, and especially since the spring of 1877, that I no longer feel equal to the burden of business in such a situation. Nevertheless, I have not, since the latter date, seriously requested to be relieved from my office, for my request of five weeks ago \* could not be taken seriously. I have refrained from expressing such a desire, not because I felt stronger, and equal to my task, but because I cannot, after all that has gone before, decide to leave your Majesty's service against your Majesty's will. I took the liberty of stating to your Majesty at Gastein, in August 1878, that after what transpired there I would not

\* Of April 6.

relinquish the service against your Majesty's wish. If I am not now mistaken in my supposition that your Majesty is still disinclined to sanction my retirement from the service, I can, nevertheless, not delude myself as to the measure of my strength in relation to the opposition I meet with on all sides, but must seek, in the laws respecting substitutes, the possibility of committing the work, and the responsibility for the outcome of the same, to others. I will make definite proposals to your Majesty on the subject as soon as it is possible to judge with more certainty what course will be taken in the proceedings of the session of the Landtag, which opens this week.

V. BISMARCK.

252

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, *August 23, '80.*

Acting on your report of the 17th inst., I will relieve Minister Hoffmann of his position as a member of the Ministry of State, to which he was appointed by my decree of June 6, 1876, and of the office of Minister for Trade and Commerce, bestowed on him by my decrees of March 14 and 24 1879, permitting him to retain the rank and title of a Minister of State. I leave you to inform Minister Hoffmann of this, and commission you to undertake the direction of the Ministry for Trade and Commerce until further notice.

WILHELM.

To the President of the Ministry of State.

253

(Extract.)

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *August 10, '80.*

I took the liberty of proposing to your Majesty the personal union of the offices of the Prussian Minister for Commerce and the Directorate of the Imperial Department for the Interior, on the presumption that a sufficient guarantee

would thus be assured for a legislative treatment of the commercial and industrial affairs in Prussia and in the Empire, from absolutely similar points of view with exactly similar aims.

The experience of the past year, on which I have had occasion to some extent to report to your Majesty, has not always confirmed my presumption. It has rather shown that the union of the Prussian Ministry of Commerce with the Empire, when it is limited to the person of the Director of the Imperial Department for the Interior, is not intimate and sure enough to exclude the prosecution of contradictory views in the legislature, and to obviate the perilous necessity of my having, in my capacity as Imperial Chancellor, and from the point of view of the Empire, to oppose what was planned, prepared, and partly carried into effect in the Prussian Ministry of Commerce, without my consent, in legislative matters.

In these circumstances it seems to be recommendable, in view of the permanent identity of the interests of Prussia and the Empire in the matter of legislation, and of the advisability of the administration of the Ministry of Commerce being in the hands of an official who is at the same time a Prussian and an Imperial official, that the Imperial Chancellor himself should be made also Prussian Minister for Commerce and Industry,\* as, for similar reasons, he is Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

V. BISMARCK.

254

BERLIN, December 18, '80.

I am very grateful to you for your letter of the 15th inst., as it explains to me your views on the *revirement* of my diplomats, leaving the definite decision on the same until after the Hatzfeldt *débrouillement*, and after your oral report.

\* Bismarck was appointed Minister of Commerce on Sept. 13, 1880.

I should have wished one appointment to be made at once, before the King of Wurtemberg leaves for almost half a year's absence. I refer to the removal of Alvensleben to Stuttgart, which you propose, and which I also wish, and I know from a trustworthy source that this is also the wish of their Wurtemberg Majesties, who, however, named Radolinsky and Werdeleben as well. As the King starts on the 29th inst., this appointment is now hardly possible.

I am glad to hear from eyewitnesses, Reuss, St. Vallier, Lehndorff, and Sabouroff, who have paid you a visit, that they found you well, which prophesises a good winter.

Your

WILHELM.

My heartiest Christmas wishes to your family and you!

255

*March 14, '81.*

You found the right words, in your sympathising letter, for this terrible occurrence:\* what a void it creates for me, and I add *for us*, especially in the matter under negotiation. May God help further.

WILHELM.

256

*March 22, '81.*

Heartiest thanks for your loyal wishes for to-day! The Lord of life and death watches over every mortal, therefore over me too, and will order the duration of my life according to His will. But how unexpectedly He often interposes, is shown by these past few days, which sadly cloud the happiness of this present day!

Your

WILHELM.

\* The assassination of Czar Alexander II.

257

BERLIN, *April 1, '81.*

Contrary to my usual custom of congratulating you in person on this anniversary, I am compelled to-day to do this in writing. You can imagine that my wish is still only that Providence may give you health, and with it strength and continued perseverance in your splendid but difficult vocation, so that you may be preserved to me and to the Fatherland, for the realisation of many more of the great plans which your genius suggests to your creative power. May God grant it!

As I do not imagine that you know, either in the original or from copies, the relief in the Marshal's Hall of the Lichte-  
erfelde School for Cadets, I send you these copies to-day. May the military training institution continue to produce men intellectually and bodily capable of achieving for our posterity as great things as have been accomplished by our contemporaries!

Your grateful King

WILHELM.

The reason of my sending these congratulations by letter is a severe blow on the forehead which I received yesterday in getting into the carriage, after the *diné* with the Hohenzollern couple. It is not anything serious, but it necessitates care and rest, though the doctor has ordered me to take a drive in the sunshine.

258

BERLIN, *April 2, '81.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious congratulations on my birthday, and for the gracious words of appreciation with which they are accompanied. It is with great interest that I have become acquainted with the reliefs of the Marshal's Hall at Lichte-  
erfelde; I have, unfor-



tunately, not yet seen the School for Cadets, as during the past few years I have never been able to spare sufficient health or time to see the Berlin sights. I fully share your Majesty's belief in the future of our military training, and see in it a counterpoise to many evil consequences of our civil education. I rejoice at each new year which God presents to me, in order that I may work further in your Majesty's service in the development of the Fatherland, and I am thereby ever more and more firmly convinced that God's Providence is preparing a more favourable future for the Germans than for the other nations. May He long preserve your Majesty's experienced and paternal guidance to us for this purpose, and for to-day allow the external injury to pass quickly and painlessly.

V. BISMARCK.

259

BERLIN, *April 20, '81.*

From the memorial of John Booth, of Klein-Flottbeck, which was presented to me on the 16th inst., and is returned herewith, I learn with extreme satisfaction of the endeavours that are being made to realise my cherished wish that the Kurfürstendamm may be replaced by an imposing ornamental road. It will give me great pleasure if the efforts are successful, and I will gladly further the scheme by all legal and financial means in my power.

WILHELM.

TO PRINCE VON BISMARCK,

President of the Ministry of State.

260

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, *August 15, '81.*

I am very glad to hear from *yourself* that you feel so much better after your "cure," but that of course a quieter "after-cure" is necessary. I shall be in Berlin to-morrow,

and will come to you between 1 and 3 o'clock on my way back here.

Your

WILHELM.

261

BERLIN, *December 18, '81.*

I must tell you of an extraordinary dream I had last night, which was as clear as I now relate it.

The Reichstag met for the first time after the present recess. On Count Eulenburg's entrance the discussion abruptly ceased; after a long interval the President called on the last speaker to continue the debate. Silence! The President thereupon declared the sitting adjourned. This was the signal for a great tumult and clamour. No order, it was urged, should be bestowed on any member during the Session of the Reichstag; the Monarch may not be mentioned during the session. The House adjourns till to-morrow. Eulenburg's appearance in the Chamber is again greeted with hisses and commotion—and then I awoke in such a state of nervous excitement that it was long before I recovered, and I could not sleep from half-past four to half-past six.

All this happened in the House in my presence, as clearly as I have written it down.

I will not hope that the dream will be realised, but it is certainly peculiar. I dreamt it after six hours of quiet sleep, so it could not have been directly produced by our conversation.

*Enfin*, I could not but tell you of this curious occurrence.

Your

WILHELM.

262

BERLIN, *December 18, '81.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious letter. I quite believe that the dream owed its origin, not exactly to my report, but to the general impression obtained

during the last few days from Puttkamer's \* oral report, the newspaper articles, and my report. The pictures we have in our minds when awake do not reappear in the mirror of our dreams until our mental faculties have been well-rested by sleep. Your Majesty's communication encourages me to relate a dream I had in the troublous days of the spring of 1863. I dreamt, and I told my dream at once to my wife and to others the next morning, that I was riding along a narrow Alpine path, to the right an abyss, and to the left rocks; the path became narrower and narrower, until at last my horse refused to take another step, and there was no room either to turn or to dismount. I then struck the smooth rocky wall with my riding whip in my left hand, and invoked God; the whip became interminably long, and the wall of rock collapsed like a scene in the theatre, opening up a wide pathway, with a view over hills and forests such as one sees in Bohemia. I also caught sight of Prussian troops, with their banners, and, still in my dreams, wondered how I could best report this quickly to your Majesty. This dream was realised, and I awoke from it glad and strengthened.

The bad dream from which your Majesty awoke nervous and agitated can be realised only in so far that we shall still have many stormy and noisy parliamentary debates, which must unfortunately undermine the prestige of the Parliaments and seriously interfere with State business. Your Majesty's presence at these debates is an impossibility; and I regard such scenes as we have lately witnessed in the Reichstag regrettable enough as a standard of our morals and our political education, perhaps also our political qualifications, but not as a misfortune in themselves: *l'excès du mal en devient le remède*.

Will your Majesty pardon, with your accustomed graciousness, these holiday reflections, which were suggested by

\* Minister for the Interior, and Vice-President of the Ministry of State.

your Majesty's letter; for from yesterday till January 9th we have holidays and rest.

BISMARCK.

## 263

BERLIN, *January 11, '82.*

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious criticism passed on my yesterday's speech, which I had, unfortunately, to deliver while suffering from severe facial neuralgia.

The sovereign decree of the 4th inst. to the Ministry of State was countersigned by me in the draft; if I had not done this, the opponents would have used the omission as a pretext, in alleged consideration for the Royal signature, to decline any public discussion of the decree, and thereby lessen the impression on the people.

V. BISMARCK.

Marginal note by the King:

I see, therefore, that you are not against a discussion of my message. I thought the contrary would be best, as this discussion *may* render my position towards the Landtag an awkward one, seeing that the mention of my name there cannot now be prevented. I trust to your talent to set this affair in the right track by your replies.

WILHELM.

BERLIN, *January 11, '82.*

## 264

LIEUT.-GENERAL V. ALBEDYLL TO BISMARCK.

BERLIN, *March 22, '82.*

His Majesty the Emperor and King has been graciously pleased, by means of an Order of the Cabinet bearing to-day's date, to permit your Excellency's son-in-law, Count zu Rantzau, lately lieutenant in the Landwehr Cavalry Guards, to wear the uniform of the third Guard Regiment of Lancers, with the badges prescribed for retired officers,—

and to appoint your Excellency's son, lieutenant Count William von Bismarck-Schönhausen, of the Landwehr Cavalry Guards, one of the officers *à la suite* of the army, with the uniform of the First Regiment of Dragoon Guards.

I have the honour, by his Majesty's orders, herewith obediently to inform your Excellency of the above.

V. ALBEDYLL.

265

BERLIN, March 22, '82.

Will your Majesty be graciously pleased to accept my most respectful thanks for the gracious distinctions, of which I was in ignorance until this morning, with which your Majesty has to-day favoured my son, and my son-in-law Count Rantzau.

V. BISMARCK.

266

BERLIN, May 10, '82.

I thank you most heartily for your kind congratulations on the birth of my great-grandson. This happy family event is also historically of extreme importance. If Providence permits the little stranger to live and thrive, his future is determined, and I shall thus see before me my three successors to the throne! A mighty thought!—

Your communications regarding your own state of health are less gratifying, and this I regret in every respect, for your presence is sadly needed during the forthcoming important proceedings in the Reichstag. Although a great change has taken place in public opinion with respect to the monopoly question,\* this is still very *précaire*, and only you are capable of saving it, or at least of reconstructing it for next year.

The Landtag, which is to be closed to-morrow, has on the whole passed off better than might have been expected;

\* The tobacco monopoly.



though the last days of its existence have been anything but pleasant ones. The English-Irish and the French-Egyptian questions are *les points noirs du moment*! That Czar A. has finally appointed Giers, and has, according to to-day's telegram, yielded to the Prince of Bulgaria's insistence, and recalled Chitrovo,\* and Prince Kotschubey's appointment as Mistress of the Robes, are the first bright spots in the Russian chaos which has already lasted a year! But Ignatieff?!

I hope, then, soon to see you again.

Your grateful King

WILHELM.

267

(Draft.)

FRIEDRICHSRUH, May 26, '82.

I thank your Majesty most respectfully for the gracious letter of the 25th, and am glad that your Majesty has overcome the fatigues of the exercising period with your accustomed vigour.

Since the weather has been warmer I have personally felt much better, and now hope certainly to be able to come to Berlin before the Reichstag meets, and resume my duties, although, after the experience of the last few months, I have become very fearful of calculating on my health.†

For a month past I have been hoping from week to week to be able to submit the necessary proposals to your Majesty, after discussing the same with Count Hatzfeldt, respecting the definite appointment of Count Hatzfeldt as Secretary of State, and the filling of the vacant diplomatic posts. Owing to my illness, and to Count Hatzfeldt's journey to the official opening of the St. Gothard railway, I have been prevented

\* Russian Consul-General for Bulgaria.

† Bismarck returned to Berlin on June 5th.

from doing this; yesterday, however, in view of the necessity for reprinting the Imperial and State Handbook, and in order that the posts should not be entered in it as being vacant, I instructed Under-Secretary of State Busch to propose to your Majesty the appointment of Count Hatzfeldt as Secretary of State, and the Envoy v. Radowitz as Ambassador in Constantinople. I would have liked to consult with Count Hatzfeldt before your Majesty came to a definite decision, but do not know if his return from Italy is sufficiently near to be awaited. Every delay is of advantage to Count Hatzfeldt, as the moment is postponed when his salary of £6,000 a year as an Ambassador will be reduced to £2,400 as a Minister of State. I have, however, nothing to advance against your Majesty's opinion that matters cannot continue as they are now, and will direct Dr. Busch to communicate with Count Hatzfeldt by telegraph.

As I am unable, owing to my illness, to follow more than the most necessary foreign business, I could not immediately execute the command for information respecting the Pension Bill for officers and Imperial officials. I am, therefore, writing simultaneously to Minister v. Bitter and Secretary Scholz, who represent me in internal affairs, to make the report, as commanded, to your Majesty.

V. BISMARCK.

268

BERLIN, *June 6, '82.*

Very glad to know you are with us again, it is to be hoped in much better health than during the last few weeks. You will let me know when I can speak to you, as soon as you are fully rested.

Your

WILHELM.

269

BERLIN, October 30, '82.

I am pleased to see from your kind letter that your health is much improved, and I gladly consent to your longer absence, in order that you may gain still more strength for the winter campaign in the Chamber.

I can only coincide with your satisfaction at the better political temperature in the country which the elections have revealed, and I am quite of your opinion that the decrees of last November and January—the *work alone of your great forethought*—have finally brought about this change in *thinking* politicians. May the national policy be finally victorious in the debates, as we vainly hoped would be the case last year!

Your son's communications from London are exceedingly *intéressant*, and the confidence placed in him by English statesmen is one reason more for assigning him the permanent higher rôle at the Embassy, which Count Hatzfeldt told me to-day I can expect soon to decide upon.

We were extraordinarily favoured by the weather for the shooting at Ludwigslust. My bag included four red-deer, though one was very small, and twenty-one wild pigs.

With kindest regards to your wife,

Your grateful King

WILHELM.

270

BERLIN, December 15, '82.

I received your Majesty's gracious letter yesterday evening, and fully share your Majesty's conviction that we have no right to demand explanations from Russia with respect to the fortresses and railways she is constructing, and that it would not be politic to set on foot a press polemic on the

subject between the two countries. In submitting proposals on the matter to your Majesty, Count Hatzfeldt shows that he has not rightly understood me or the requests made to me by the highest military authorities. Since last summer (1881), the Minister for War and Count Moltke have been urging me to find money for *our* military railways, as at present the Russians can concentrate on the frontier more quickly than we can. I have *declined* to lay these wants before *your Majesty* and the Reichstag, although I do not dispute their being well-founded; they are, however, purely *military* demands, and as such must be made by the military and not by the political authorities. I have advised that, before your Majesty is asked to request the Reichstag for money for work on our railways, public opinion *here* should be prepared, in a manner calculated to spare Russian susceptibility, for this need of money. Russia's right to construct railways within her frontiers is as indisputable as your Majesty's right to fortify Königsberg; and it would, in my opinion, be quite a mistake to set the press in motion against Russia. I have not even thought of bringing this purely military question before your Majesty or Parliament, as I have too much other business, and the matter would acquire *political* colour if I conducted it. I shall not be able to report why Count Hatzfeldt broached the subject in *my* name until I have spoken to him.

V. BISMARCK.

As usual, I offer you my heartiest congratulations on the anniversary of the day on which the Almighty in His wisdom and grace gave you to the world and—to me!! May this year bring you less bodily pain than you have had to suffer during the last few months. I have had bitter experience in the past few weeks of what defective health

means, having been compelled to communicate with you through third persons, though always, God be praised for it, in perfect accord. And that is why I must have recourse to my pen, instead of coming to you in person.

As Easter is so near I send you as a memento of that festival, and of to-day, the inevitable egg; it bears the Eagle which you have created anew! May its flight during the next few days be an auspicious one!

Your faithfully devoted, grateful

WILHELM.

272

BADEN-BADEN, *October 4, '83.*

Your kind letter, in which you announced to me that unfortunately, though not quite unexpectedly, you would not be able to be present at the ceremony of unveiling the monument on the Niederwald, could not but affect me painfully, and it did this the more when the ceremony passed off so well. This was the most successful ceremony that I have ever witnessed, the order, the way it was carried out, the grandeur of the monument itself, the unexpected clearing-up of the weather, and above all the feelings which pervaded those who had actively participated in the fights and the successes which the monument commemorates! The first place among these belongs to you, who have brought about those mighty events, and conducted them to a magnificent peace. It would have been a grateful relief to my heart if I could have again publicly expressed to you my thanks and my acknowledgments! But this was not to be; you were, however, very frequently thought of!

I am exceedingly glad that you feel somewhat better after the "cures," and I share your hopes that you may enter on the laborious winter with renewed strength.

You will already have heard from Count Hatzfeldt of the



interview I had with Prince Dolgorouky. I send you enclosed a memorandum of the chief points touched. I fully appreciate the Czar's intention in desiring this interview; I have never doubted his feelings and his wishes, but there is something unnatural in the immense accumulation of troops on his western frontier. . . .

With kindest regards to your wife,

Your grateful

WILHELM.

## 273

BERLIN, December 21, '83.

As my son starts to-night on his return journey home, we must congratulate ourselves that this significant move, taken in consequence of your foresight, which is as usual correct, has been such a fortunate one in every respect. My son's journey through Spain and Italy was a veritable triumphal procession, and it is fortunate that he has reached the mature age of 52, or his head might have been turned with such a success! Your last letter, of the 17th inst., replying to a question raised by me as to whether we could not obtain some *security* that my son's visit would be acceptable to the Vatican, entered so fully into the *pro et contra* of this *démarche* that I only regret having been the cause of your doing this work; I only touched the subject in a note to Count Hatzfeldt, as we had not discussed it orally. I had mentioned the *pro et contra* to you, but as I could not decide alone I sent this question to you. Unfortunately, your answer came an hour after the telegraph had decided the matter in the way you advised, making your work superfluous, for which I must again claim your forbearance!

The intention of Czar A. III. and Giers to send Prince Orloff to Berlin as *ambassadeur* is also referred to in your letter.

I certainly do the Prince full justice, but his facility for

modifying things in accordance with the impression he has received somewhat perplexes me. Not long ago, for instance, he defended the Poles in the presence of the Empress, and when he left the drawing-room we could do nothing but look at each other wonderingly, for we were perfectly mystified! Moreover, his striking mental vivacity, which makes him almost loquacious in political matters, as a *tour-nure* completely in contrast with our sober judgment of important questions and with our quiet social conditions,—so that I fear he will meet with no success on our sober *terrain*.

I have long been aware of the fact that you are on friendly terms with him, and esteem him very highly, and would therefore be inclined to advocate the idea of having him in Berlin. I thought it only right, however, to tell you my opinion, as, in view of the uncertain political and internal conditions of Russia, Orloff's *remuant* nature would not produce a tranquilising effect on the feeling here towards his country. You write me that he is eager to obtain the Berlin post; seeing that he already occupies such an eminent position in Paris, which is a much more amusing city. I can explain this only by assuming that Berlin, owing to your excellent policy, has acquired such a high reputation in the world that every capable diplomat *wishes* to be stationed *here*!

With kindest regards to your wife,

Your grateful

WILHELM.

274

(Christmas, 1883.)

December 24, '83.

The crowning-stone of your policy, a ceremony \* which essentially concerned yourself, and at which you could not, unfortunately, be present!

W.

\* The unveiling of the Niederwald monument.

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *December 25, '83.*

I thank your Majesty respectfully, and from my heart, for the gracious Christmas present,\* and especially for the gracious words which accompanied it. They give me the complete satisfaction that I should have felt on the Niederwald, if I could have been present at the ceremony. That your Majesty is satisfied is worth more to me than the praise of *all* others. I thank God that he has so constituted my heart, for I have been able to earn your Majesty's approbation, but rarely and only temporarily the applause of others. I also thank your Majesty for the unwaveringness with which your Majesty has always retained confidence in me during the long period of more than twenty years, in spite of the attacks of my enemies and of my own faults, and has continued to be a gracious master to me. More than this, together with peace with my own conscience in the sight of God, I do not need in this world. God's blessing has been with your Majesty's government, and has accorded to your Majesty the privilege over other monarchs who have accomplished great things, that your Majesty's servants can look back to the work they have done in the service with gratitude to your Majesty. The ruler's fidelity engenders and maintains loyalty in his servants.

My wife proffers her most respectful thanks for your Majesty's gracious greetings in the gracious letter of the 21st inst., to which I reply separately.† She is slowly recovering, but I have been very anxious about her for several weeks. She desires me to place at your Majesty's feet her most humble New Year's wishes. My health is at present better than it has been for years past, and I was yesterday able to enjoy several hours' ride in the woods with my two

\* A copy of the Niederwald monument in bronze.

† This reply has been lost.

sons, who are here on leave. My nerves are not yet fit for the strain of the mental work attendant on the fulfilment of my official duties, but I hope for considerable improvement if your Majesty will be graciously pleased to permit me to stay here till the end of next week.

May God grant your Majesty a happy Christmas, in health and contentment.

V. BISMARCK.

276

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *December 31, '83.*

I place at your Majesty's feet my most respectful and cordial New Year's wishes. This is the twenty-second New Year on which I have had the honour, as your Majesty's Minister, to congratulate your Majesty, and to thank God for preserving your Majesty to us and the country, and to me your Majesty's favour and confidence. My wife and children and my sister,\* who is at present staying here, beg for most gracious permission to add their most humble congratulations to mine, and they unite with me in the prayer that God may, in the coming year as heretofore, protect and preserve your Majesty in health to the blessing of the country and the joy of your subjects. V. BISMARCK.

277

BERLIN, *January 9, '84.*

The present is the reply I owe you for your Christmas letter of thanks and your New Year's congratulations. The sentiments you express to me at the turn of the year are as dear to me as ever, and your promise to preserve your strength for me is the most I can hope for in the new year. That you are much better in bodily health is confirmed by everybody who has seen you lately. It appears, therefore, that the abstinence "cure," as I have christened the course of treatment you were advised to undergo, has really done its

\* Frau Malwine von Arnim.

duty in restoring you bodily mobility. May the improvement be a permanent one. I am also glad to hear from yourself that the Princess is recovering from her indisposition, please remember me to her most particularly.—

Knowing the favourable opinion you hold as to Prince Orloff's qualifications for the post in Berlin, I can judge what your answer would be to my remarks, so that I can dismiss them.

The tranquillity which has prevailed in the Russian political atmosphere since the Czar *himself* introduced the *corde sensible* is very pleasing, and Giers' visit to Vienna will serve to confirm it; but there is still cause for concern in the fact that everything must depend on *this man* remaining, and that other influences imperil his retention of his office! He has held his position for at least six years, and still longer if the time is included during which he acted as substitute for Prince Gortchakoff. As I bestowed the Black Eagle, with your concurrence, on Kalnoky after he had held his position for two years, and before he possessed the Stephans Order which he received a fortnight ago, Giers certainly deserves a distinction now, seeing that the improvement in the Russian relations is his work. He already possesses the Grand Cross, in brilliants, of the Order of the Red Eagle, so that there remains only the Order of the Black Eagle to bestow. There is indeed one objection, viz. that the relations have hitherto been considered by public opinion to be worse than was really the case, only a very short time has intervened since the improvement, and such a high distinction would, therefore, be misunderstood. Besides, I do not know if he already has the Andreas Order? <sup>1</sup> Should you advocate the bestowal, it might be made on his return from St. Petersburg? <sup>2</sup>

Jan. 13. Many interruptions, preventing me from finishing this letter, coincided with your son's passing through on his way to St. Petersburg. As the notification through



Count Hatzfeldt was delayed, I enquired of the latter what this journey signifies—for your son had reported himself in due course.

Hatzfeldt's communication, with your letter to Schweinitz, crossed my enquiry.

I can only rejoice at the object you have in view, and, after an interview with your son, am confirmed in my opinion that we may congratulate ourselves on this mission. I found him so completely *tanti* for the confirmation—if this is at all possible—of the betterment of our relations with Russia, that I hope for the best!

Whereas things are improving in the East—leaving the internal condition of Russia out of the question—things in the West look worse than ever. France continues her unconsidered colonial policy, and squanders money and men, though in the end, it appears, she prevails. England will now perceive the consequences of her one-sided Egyptian policy since Alexandria, and will ultimately do what she has sworn *not* to do, viz. swallow up Egypt in one way or another. Difficult times seem to be in store for our little friend \* in Spain. He has assured me several times that he would rather stake his life in his country's conflicts than *fléchir*. It is, however, more probable that he will be called upon to abdicate his throne than to sacrifice his life! *Qui vivra, verra*, said Metternich to me in London in 1848, no doubt thinking of a *better* future still for *himself*!

Your son also brought me confirmation of the better news regarding your health, although you seem to be already occupied far too much with matters that are not always pleasant! I can only wish for a continuance of the improvement both in the Princess's and your health!

Your grateful WILHELM.

Marginal notes by Bismarck:

<sup>1</sup> no. <sup>2</sup> still later.

\* King Alfonso XII.

BERLIN, March 9, '84.

I must beg a thousand pardons for not having returned the enclosure sooner, but the facts of the case are as follows. I had proposed to you to *blacken* \* Giers after his *six years'* service, as was done with Kalnoky after *two years'* service; Giers has always been on our side, his last circular tour has reacted most felicitously on his master, and thus for the time being assured quiet in Europe. I discovered no reply to this in your letter, and thought it might be in the enclosure,—and that is why I asked for it again. As this letter too contains nothing on the bestowing of the order, I do not follow the matter further, saying to myself: no answer is also an answer—I understand now!

Granville's *billet* † must be extremely gratifying to you as a father, and I congratulate you on this competent judgment on his ‡ abilities. I am, therefore, particularly glad that he is being sent to St. Petersburg, where in a short time he will succeed in playing as important a rôle and in being distinguished, as was the case recently at the *private* ball at Jelagin, where he was the *only* diplomat present. I am surprised, therefore, that you had your son included among the candidates for Carlsruhe which Count Hatzfeldt submitted to me. I should have thought he would be far more serviceable at St. Petersburg than at Carlsruhe, for the horizon at Carlsruhe must be very small when compared with St. Petersburg.

Your grateful

WILHELM.

Hoping to see you soon, and with hearty greetings to the Princess.

\* To bestow the Order of the Black Eagle.

† Addressed to Count Herbert Bismarck on his removal from London to St. Petersburg early in January, 1884.

‡ Count Herbert Bismarck.

FRIEDRICHSRUH, *March 10, '84.*

Will your Majesty most graciously pardon me for having neglected to express my opinion on the question of bestowing the Order on Minister von Giers. I would most respectfully propose to your Majesty to use the occasion of your Majesty's birthday for bestowing this distinction on Monsieur de Giers.

With regard to the Carlsruhe appointment, I fully share your Majesty's doubt as to the advisability of giving it to my son, and did not, in reality, propose this, I only mentioned that if Herr v. Derenthall and Count Berchem were not chosen for the post his name came next on the list of secretaries. Under any circumstances I would wish, in my son's interests, that he might not leave St. Petersburg without having been, at least for a time, *Chargé d'Affaires* there. The opportunity for this now offers, if your Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant the leave of absence requested by General v. Schweinitz. I believe my son personally would hardly wish to be withdrawn, by being appointed to Carlsruhe, from the wider political circles in which he has hitherto moved. I myself was animated, in mentioning him on this occasion, by the idea that on my son's attaining a higher rank I might use him as my assistant in ministerial affairs. He is thoroughly qualified to work at headquarters, as I have employed him for years as my confidential secretary in most important business matters, and also by reason of the personal connections he has formed abroad. This end can, however, be attained with your Majesty's assent in other ways, without passing over the older candidates, Derenthall and Berchem, for if this were done I should be suspected of bringing undue personal motives to bear.

I also beg most respectfully to report that I am expecting my doctor here to-day, and hope he will allow me to leave for

Berlin, so that I trust to beg your Majesty for a gracious audience in Berlin before the end of this week.

V. BISMARCK.

280

BERLIN, *May 7, '84.*

As the Empress considers that she needs a change of air, she will leave on Saturday, by the doctor's advice, for Baden. On the same advice I am to go to Wiesbaden—to vegetate—but only for a week; unfortunately I should just be away during the debates on the Socialist Law, and this I should regret very much, especially if it should come to a dissolution of the Reichstag, as difficulties would then arise owing to my having to sign the *order*. You must decide if you consider my *presence* here on this account absolutely necessary. As I dine with the Prince of Wales in the New Palace, I could speak to you only this evening; I could see you at 7 o'clock, however.

WILHELM.

281

*May 10, '84.*

I congratulate you on the unexpected victory in the second reading! \*

WILHELM.

282

SCHLOSS BABELSBERG, *September 1, '84.*

To-day's anniversary, which brings up before me one of the greatest events of the twenty-two years during which we have worked together, also reminds me that on this day and during two wars you stood by me, not only as a sterling counsellor, but also as a soldier, and that there is in Prussia an order "for merit," which you do not possess. Although this is a specifically military order, you ought to have had it

\* The Socialist Law passed the second reading in the Reichstag on May 10th, 1884.

long ago, for you have in truth shown the highest courage of a soldier in many a difficult time, and you have fully participated at my side in two wars, so that you have every claim to a high military distinction. I now repair the omission by bestowing on you the enclosed *Order pour le mérite*, and also add the *oak-leaves* to show that you ought to have had it long since, and that you have repeatedly earned it. I know so well that you have the heart and the feelings of a soldier, that I can hope to give you pleasure with this Order, which so many of your forefathers were proud to wear; I also give myself the satisfaction of bestowing on the man whom God's gracious Providence has placed at my side, and who has done such great things for the Fatherland, the well-merited recognition of his services as a soldier. I shall heartily and greatly rejoice to see you wearing the *Order pour le mérite* in future.

WILHELM.

283

VARZIN, September 2, '84.

Your Majesty has made the anniversary of Sedan an especially glad and honourable one for me by the gracious bestowal on me of the Order *pour le mérite*, and your Majesty has enhanced the significance of this distinction by the exceedingly gracious words which accompanied the Order. It renders me happy to learn from them, and from a retrospective view of a long series of years, that your Majesty's favour and confidence have always remained with me unchangeably, and that your Majesty's indulgence is continued even after my powers have declined. Your Majesty's appreciation and favour is in itself the highest satisfaction in this world to which I aspire, but it is also a pleasure to me when the world learns that I remain continually in possession of this blessing for which I strive, the favour of my earthly master. I shall always loyally and zealously endeavour to deserve it, and to keep myself worthy to be es-



teemed by such a high and competent authority as your Majesty "a Prussian soldier in heart and feeling." Greater praise I do not aspire to than is contained in these words, when they bear your Majesty's signature.

I hope to place my repeated thanks at your Majesty's feet in person on the 11th, and to see your Majesty in the best of health.

V. BISMARCK.

284

BERLIN, *December 25, '84.*

I thank your Majesty for the pretty Christmas present. The work of art reminds me to a certain extent of my own position.—While the centaur needs both his hands to carry the gigantic horn on his shoulder, the woman hangs with her whole weight on to his beard; this is what the opposition in Parliament does with me while I have both hands full in doing your Majesty's and the country's service; it pulls at me, at the risk of disturbing me in carrying the burden of business. It is also much uglier than the female that the artist has hung on the centaur's beard. I shall not, however, let myself be deterred by all this from keeping the burden which I bear in your Majesty's service cheerfully and firmly on my shoulder, as long as God gives me the strength to do so, and I retain your Majesty's favour.

To my most cordial and respectful wishes for your Majesty's Christmas festival I add the same for the New Year, though I hope to repeat these in person.

V. BISMARCK.

285

BERLIN, *December 30, '84.*

The ovations in the addresses you continue to receive\* are gratifying to me no less than to yourself.

\* On the occasion of the adverse resolution in the Reichstag on the motion to create a new office of Director in the Foreign Office.

How is the improvement to be maintained permanently, however, when, as Madai reported to me to-day, N. N.,\* the expelled Berlin City Councillor, sets up as a cigar-dealer in Brandenburg, almost at the gates of Berlin,—when Bebel is expelled from Vienna and is allowed to deliver his insolent speeches in the Reichstag here?

Such examples show, in my opinion, that the expulsion law is non-effective! And can nothing be done?

Your  
WILHELM.

286

*February 7, '85.*

What a catastrophe in Egypt!!† Had England used for Suakin, Berber, and Khartoum the millions expended on the Nile Expedition, she would have been in Khartoum three months ago! And now reinforcements from India!  
W.

287

*BERLIN, April 1, '85.*

MY DEAR PRINCE,

When such an ardent desire is shown by the German people to manifest to you on your seventieth birthday that all you have done for the greatness of the Fatherland is still held in grateful remembrance, I feel impelled from my heart to tell you to-day how much I rejoice that such a current of thanks to and admiration of you is passing through the nation. I am glad of this, as it is an acknowledgment that you have abundantly earned, and it cheers my heart to see these feelings manifested in such a general manner. It is an ornament to the nation in the present, and a good augury for its future, when it shows its appreciation of the true and the great, and when it does honour to its deserving men. It

\* The name is not given in the original.

† The capture of Khartoum by the Mahdi's troops, and the death of General Gordon.

is an especial pleasure to me and my house to participate in such a celebration, and we desire to express by means of this picture \* with what feelings of grateful remembrance we do this. For the picture represents one of the greatest moments in the history of the Hohenzollern house, a moment which no one will ever recall without at the same time thinking of your great services.

You know, my dear Prince, that I shall always have the fullest confidence in you, and entertain the most sincere affection and the warmest gratitude towards you! I am therefore telling you nothing new, and I think that this picture will be a testimony to your descendants that your Emperor and King, with his house, are fully aware of what we owe to you.

With these sentiments I end this letter, and remain, even beyond the grave,

Your grateful, truly devoted  
Emperor and King,  
WILHELM.

288

*BERLIN, April 9, '85.*

I rejoice to learn from your report of the 4th inst. that the sum of 1,200,000 marks has been collected from all parts of the German Empire by a committee of Germans of all classes, and was placed at your absolute disposal for public purposes on your seventieth birthday. In reply to your request, I gladly empower you to accept this sum, and any further still outstanding contributions, and await your later communication of your intentions with regard to the employment of the same.†

WILHELM.

VON BOETTICHER.

\* By Anton von Werner, of the proclamation of William I. as Emperor, at Versailles.

† Prince Bismarck used the money to establish the "Schönhauser Fund" for students preparing for higher educational appointments.

289

KISSINGEN, *June, 23, '85.*

I thank your Majesty most humbly for the gracious telegram with which your Majesty has honoured me. The losses which your Majesty has sustained recently, by the death of faithful servants, are numerous and heavy, and exhort us who are left behind to fill, by increased devotion in the sovereign service and to your Majesty's person, the empty places of those to whom your Majesty was attached. It is especially painful to me that my state of health does not permit me to manifest my most respectful sympathy in your Majesty's affliction by my presence. I am permitted to hope, however, that my "cure" this year will have an especially favourable effect, and already feel traces of increased vigour when taking bodily exercise. This result is to a great extent due to the decreased burden of work; the slowness with which the English ministerial crisis is developing has produced a stillness in diplomatic intercourse which is unusual even during the summer. No reports entailing much work are coming in from any Ambassador. The Duke of Cambridge's wishes, on which I report to-day officially, have already been fully replied to by your Majesty, and everything was then said to the Duke that is to be said; your Majesty has thus amply fulfilled all the demands of *courtoisie*, the *business* side of the affair is not in your Majesty's hands, but in those of the Federal Council and the Brunswick Ministry. . . . May God give his blessing to your Majesty's "cure" at Ems and especially at Gasstein this year as in former years.

V. BISMARCK.

290

BERLIN, *July 8, '85.*

Will your Majesty graciously permit me most respectfully to repeat my thanks, which I have already telegraphed, for

your Majesty's gracious congratulations on my son's\* marriage. The young couple has left for Hanau to get their future home in readiness, they will then go by way of Paris to England and Scotland for the honeymoon. I myself intend to take advantage of your Majesty's gracious permission to stay at Varzin until the end of August, and to rest as much as current business will allow. My wife is going to Homburg for a few weeks, and my eldest son will also at the same time take the waters at Königstein, near Homburg. During my son's absence, Count Hatzfeldt will conduct the affairs here, with the assistance of Count Berchem, the departmental director. I hope to be here myself by the time the slack summer season is over, or at all events in Friedrichsruh, where I can be easily reached. In the meantime, I hope to repair the damages inflicted on my powers for work by the fatiguing winter. My wife and I have received with extreme pleasure the news that your Majesty is feeling so much better and stronger, and we hope to God that the Gastein "cure" will completely restore your Majesty, so that your Majesty may enter on the winter armed with your accustomed powers of resistance. . . .

V. BISMARCK.

291

BERLIN, *September 25, '85.*

My stay at Varzin has not benefited my health to the extent I had hoped. In my doctor's opinion this is mainly due to the fact that, for various reasons, my work has been augmented during the past few months. The unusually bad weather which we have experienced during the summer in Pomerania is also no doubt partly responsible for this ill-success, the long periods of cold and rain having seriously interfered with my taking the necessary exercise in the open air. Since my return to Berlin at the end of last week the

\* Count William Bismarck.



claims on my person have increased considerably, so that my health is becoming daily worse, and I suffer besides from severe facial neuralgia.

The chief cause of my being over-burdened is that in Berlin so many personal claims are made on me that I cannot reject without being impolite, and moreover the business demanding my personal attention, not only in the foreign but also in the home service, is always more voluminous when I am here than when I am in the country. In order, therefore, to preserve my strength for the parliamentary winter campaign, I beg your Majesty graciously to permit me to prolong my stay at Friedrichsruh, where local business demands my temporary presence next Monday.

My being at Friedrichsruh and not in Berlin will affect the course of foreign business only in so far that I shall be spared much personal intercourse with the foreign diplomats. The train service between the two places is so good (the journey occupies only four hours, and in case of necessity four or more trains run daily), that there is no danger of the service suffering; I hope, however, to reap a personal advantage, by increasing the distance between myself and the gentlemen who demand to see me without there being a pressing necessity for the interview. As soon as I am convinced that any disadvantage would accrue to the sovereign service by my remaining there, or that it is contrary to your Majesty's wishes, I would at once return to Berlin.

V. BISMARCK.

292

BERLIN, May 31, '86.

Enclosed I return you the appalling documents, retaining only your letter which accompanied them. The insight I now obtain of so many details which had hitherto escaped my notice reveals a deplorable state of affairs, and no help is conceivable! For who, after the fate of the candid but

respectful ministerial statement which he had himself demanded, will again have the courage to approach the King on this delicate subject, and mention the word "Regency" to him?

I perfectly agree with you that I can in no way interfere in this purely family and Bavarian affair, unless I am called upon to do so by one of the Imperial bodies.

Your grateful King

WILHELM.

## 293

BERLIN, March 3, '87.

I am writing to you in a sort of desperation!

You saw at the conclusion of your last personal report that I locked up the Battenberg *mémoire*, which there was no time to discuss, in the portfolio belonging to the Civil Cabinet. After dinner, which I took alone, I opened that portfolio in order to despatch its contents, took out first the said *mémoire* and laid it by itself close beside me, went through the other work in the portfolio, and then, at 7 o'clock, was going to bed to read the *mémoire* there in perfect repose. I took up the portfolio in one hand, and with the other reached for the *mémoire* which I thought had been lying all the time beside the portfolio; I did not find it, however, although I had never left the room, nor had anyone come in. My first thought was, of course, that in my confusion I had put the *mémoire* back again in the portfolio; I opened it, looked most carefully through every paper it contained—but did not find what I sought!! I then sent the portfolio away, and for a whole hour searched for the *mémoire*, although I knew quite well that I had not moved it since I took it out of the portfolio. Exhausted by the long search I went to bed, in despair! My only hope, and it was a very faint one, was that the *mémoire* might after all be hidden in one of the Wilmowsky documents. As

Wilmowsky did not return it with the other papers yesterday, I wrote him what had occurred, whereupon he came and said that there was no such document in the portfolio! Again I make careful search, but in vain! The matter remains inexplicable! for no one could even have seen the *mémoire en question*! And that such a very secret document should have disappeared!!!

Your

WILHELM.

294

MAINAU, July 17, '87.

I thank you very much for your letter, in which you inform me that you have transferred your residence to Varzin, and am glad that the *so-called* rest at Friedrichsruh has done you so much good. You do not believe that anything particularly important will transpire in the diplomatic world for some little time to come; it seems to me, however, that the *tournure* which the Bulgarian question is assuming is very serious. As this situation will not develop *quickly*, the fact that you are at some distance from Berlin need create no uneasiness, although my being at Gastein must cause some delay, however quickly you telegraph to me! *Enfin, nous verrons.*

Since I left Berlin my health has improved rapidly, so that Gastein is evidently the best for me. The frightful heat of the last ten days has been succeeded by a delightful coolness, so that my journey to-morrow will be very pleasant.

Your grateful

WILHELM.

295

BERLIN, September 23, '87.

You celebrate on September 23, my dear Prince, the day on which, twenty-five years ago, I called you into my Ministry of State, and shortly afterwards gave the Premiership

into your hands. The distinguished services you had previously rendered to the Fatherland in the most varied and important positions justified me in conferring on you this highest post. The history of the last quarter of a century proves that I did not err in my choice!

A shining example of true patriotism, of untiring activity often to the utter disregard of your health, you have been indefatigable in keeping a close watch on what were frequently overwhelming difficulties in peace and war, and have used them to lead Prussia in honour and glory to a position in the world's history which had never been dreamed of! Such achievements have been performed that the twenty-fifth anniversary of September 23, must be celebrated with thanks to God, for placing you at my side in order to execute His will on earth!

And I now once more impress these thanks on you, as I have so frequently expressed and manifested them hitherto!

From a heart filled with thankfulness I congratulate you on the celebration of such a day, and hope from my heart that your strength may long be preserved unimpaired, to be a blessing to the Crown and to the Fatherland!

Your eternally grateful King and friend

WILHELM.

P. S.

In memory of the past twenty-five years I am sending you a view of the building in which we have discussed and taken such weighty resolutions which it is to be hoped will redound to the honour and welfare of Prussia and of Germany.

I thank your Majesty in deep respect for the gracious letter of the 23rd inst., and for the gracious present of the

picture of the palace in which for so many years I have had the honour to make my reports to your Majesty, and to take your Majesty's orders. The day received especial consecration for me through the greeting in your Majesty's name with which their royal Highnesses Prince William and Prince Henry honoured me. Even without this fresh proof of favour, the feeling with which I greeted the twenty-fifth anniversary of my appointment as a Minister was one of most cordial and respectful gratitude to your Majesty. Every sovereign appoints ministers, but it is a rare occurrence in modern times for a monarch to retain a Prime Minister and to uphold him for twenty-five years, in troublous times when everything does not succeed, against all animosity and intrigues. During this period I have seen many a former friend become an opponent, but your Majesty's favour and confidence have remained unwaveringly with me. The thought of this is a rich reward to me for all my work, and a consolation in illness and solitude. I love my Fatherland, the German as well as the Prussian, but I should not have served it with gladness if it had not been granted to me to serve to the satisfaction of my King. The high position which I owe to your Majesty's favour is based on, and has as its indestructible core, your Majesty's Brandenburg liegeman and Prussian officer, and therefore I am rendered happy by your Majesty's satisfaction, without which every popularity would be valueless to me. . . . Besides many telegrams and addresses from home and abroad, I received very gracious greetings and congratulations on the twenty-third from their Majesties of Saxony and Wurtemberg, from his Royal Highness the Regent of Bavaria, the Grand-Dukes of Weimar, Baden, and Mecklenburg, and other rulers, and from his Majesty the King of Italy and Minister Crispi. The two latter touched politics, and were difficult to answer; as the text of their letters may perhaps interest your Majesty, I have instructed the Foreign Office to forward them.



I pray God that He may still longer grant me the pleasure of serving your Majesty to your Majesty's satisfaction.

V. BISMARCK.

297

BERLIN, December 23, '87.

I send you herewith your son's appointment as Privy Councillor, with the title of Excellency, as I wish to give you the pleasure of handing it to your son yourself. I think the pleasure will be threefold, a pleasure to you, to your son and to me!

I take this opportunity of explaining the silence I have hitherto maintained with regard to your proposal to induct my grandson, Prince William, more and more into State business in view of the sad condition of the health of my son, the Crown Prince! In principle I quite agree to this, but it is very difficult to carry it out. On your advice I arranged for my grandson W. to sign, when I was prevented from doing so, the current ordinances of the Civil and Military Cabinets; this arrangement, in itself a very natural one, has considerably irritated the Crown Prince, who regards it as a sign that he is being replaced in Berlin. My son's mind will certainly have been set at ease after quiet reflection. This reflection would be rendered more difficult if he learns that his son is being permitted a still greater insight into the affairs of state, and is even given a *civil adjutant*,—as I named the councillors who used to be attached to my personal service. At that time things were quite different, as there was a reason for my royal father appointing a substitute for the then Crown Prince; although it had long been evident that I should succeed to the throne, I was forty-four years of age before my introduction to state business, when my brother made me a member of the Ministry of State with the title of Prince of Prussia. In this position the services of a man experienced in affairs was a matter of

absolute necessity to prepare me for each sitting of the Ministry of State. I also daily received the political despatches, though to judge by the seals, not until they had passed through four, five, and even six hands!

There is no reason, as was the case with me who had to be prepared for a *definite object*, for assigning a statesman to my grandson merely for *conversation*, as you propose, and were this done my son would be still more irritated, which we must be careful to avoid. I propose, therefore, that the manner hitherto adopted of learning how the business of the State is conducted should be retained, viz. that my grandson be attached to one or perhaps two separate Ministries of State. As he has this winter been permitted to visit the Foreign Office voluntarily, the Finance Ministry might be added, to be replaced later perhaps by the Ministry of the Interior. This *continuation* of the present procedure would probably irritate my son less, although you will remember that he vigorously opposes even this procedure.

Please let me know your opinion on this matter.

Wishing you all a pleasant Christmas,

Your grateful

WILHELM.

Will you kindly countersign the enclosed patent before sending it to its destination. W.














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